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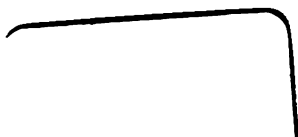
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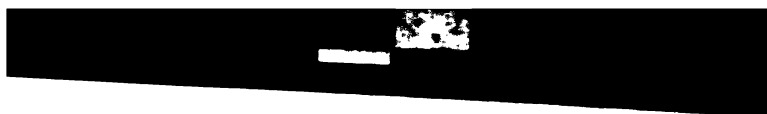
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THE
COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.









THE
COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.



THE
NT OF MONTE-CRISTO

BY
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

AUTHOR OF
THE THREE MUSKETEERS," "TWENTY YEARS AFTER," ETC

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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UNIT OF MONTREAL

ARREAR NINETEEN

ARREAR

THREE THOUSAND

THREE THOUSAND



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1919

Novels by Alexandre Dumas.

ILLUSTRATED EDITION.



MONTE CRISTO

THE THREE MUSKETEERS	}
TWENTY YEARS AFTER	
THE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE	
MARGUERITE DE VALOIS	)



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"Is all safe, M. Morrel ; and I think you will be satisfied on that head. But poor Captain Leclere——"

"What happened to him ?" asked the owner, with an air of considerable resignation. "What happened to the worthy captain ?"—"He died."

"Fell into the sea ?"

"No, sir, he died of the brain-fever in dreadful agony." Then turning to the crew, he said, "Look out there ! all ready to drop anchor !"

All hands obeyed. At the same moment the eight or ten seamen who composed the crew, sprang some to the main-sheets, others to the braces, others to the halliards, others to the jib-ropes, and others to the topsail brails. The young sailor gave a look to see his orders were promptly and accurately obeyed, and then turned again to the owner.

"And how did this misfortune occur ?" inquired he, resuming the inquiry suspended for a moment.

"Alas ! sir, in the most unexpected manner. After a long conversation with the harbour-master, Captain Leclere left Naples greatly disturbed in his mind. At the end of twenty-four hours he was attacked by a fever, and died three days afterwards. We performed the usual burial service, and he is at his rest, sewn up in his hammock with two bullets of thirty-six pounds each at his head and heels, off the island of El Giglio. We bring to his widow his sword and cross of honour. It was worth while, truly," added the young man with a melancholy smile, "to make war against the English for ten years, and to die in his bed at last, like everybody else."

"Why, you see, Edmond," replied the owner, who appeared more comforted at every moment, "we are all mortal, and the old must make way for the young. If not, why, there would be no promotion ; and as you have assured me that the cargo——"

"Is all safe and sound, M. Morrel, take my word for it; and I advise you not to take a cool for the profits of the voyage."

"But," replied the owner, following with his look Dantès, who was watching the anchoring of his vessel, "it seems to me that a sailor needs not to be so old as you say, Danglars, to understand his business; for our friend Edmond seems to understand it thoroughly, and not to require instruction from any one."

"Yes," said Danglars, casting towards Edmond a look in which a feeling of envy was strongly visible. "Yes, he is young, and youth is invariably self-confident. Scarcely was the captain's breath out of his body than he assumed the command without consulting any one, and he caused us to lose a day and a half at the Isle of Elba, instead of making for Marseilles direct."

"As to taking the command of the vessel," replied Morrel, "that was his duty as captain's mate; as to losing a day and a half off the Isle of Elba, he was wrong, unless the ship wanted some repair."

"The ship was as well as I am, and as, I hope, you are, M. Morrel, and this day and a half was lost from pure whim, for the pleasure of going ashore, and nothing else."

"Dantès!" said the shipowner, turning towards the young man, "come this way!"

"In a moment, sir," answered Dantès, "and I'm with you!" Then calling to the crew, he said—"Let go!"

The anchor was instantly dropped, and the chain ran rattling through the port-hole. Dantès continued at his post in spite of the presence of the pilot, until this manœuvre was completed, and then he added, "Lower the pennant half-mast high—put the ensign in a weft, and slope the yards!"

"You see," said Danglars, "he fancies himself captain already, upon my word."

"And so, in fact, he is," said the owner.

"Except your signature and your partner's, M. Morrel."

"And why should he not have this?" asked the owner; "he is young. it is true, but he seems to me a thorough seaman, and of full experience."

A cloud passed over Danglars' brow. "Your pardon, M. Morrel," said Dantès, approaching, "the ship now rides at anchor, and I am at your service. You hailed me, I think?"

Danglars retreated a step or two. "I wished to inquire why you stopped at the Isle of Elba?"

"I do not know, sir; it was to fulfil a last instruction of Captain Leclerc, who, when dying, gave me a packet for the Maréchal Bertrand."

"Then did you see him, Edmond?"—"Who?"

"The maréchal."—"Yes."

Morrel looked around him, and then, drawing Dantès on one side, he said suddenly—"And how is the emperor?"

"Very well, as far as I could judge from my eyes."

"You saw the emperor, then?"

"He entered the maréchal's apartment whilst I was there."

"And you spoke to him?"

"Why, it was he who spoke to me sir," said Dantès, with a smile.

"And what did he say to you?"

"Asked me questions about the ship, the time it left Marseilles, the course she had taken, and what was her cargo. I believe, if she had not been laden, and I had been her master, he would have bought her. But I told him I was only mate, and that she belonged to the firm of Morrel and Son. 'Ah! ah!' he said, 'I know them! The Morrels have been

shipowners from father to son ; and there was a Morrel who served in the same regiment with me when I was in garrison at Valence."

"*Pardieu!* and that is true!" cried the owner, greatly delighted. "And that was Policar Morrel, my uncle, who was afterwards a captain. Dantès, you must tell my uncle that the emperor remembered him, and you will see it will bring tears into the old soldier's eyes. Come, come!" continued he, patting Edmond's shoulder kindly, "you did very right, Dantès, to follow Captain Leclere's instruction, and touch at the Isle of Elba, although if it were known that you had conveyed a packet to the maréchal, and had conversed with the emperor, it might bring you into trouble."

"How could that bring me into trouble, sir?" asked Dantès ; "for I did not even know of what I was the bearer ; and the emperor merely made such inquiries as he would of the first comer. But your pardon, here are the officers of health and the customs coming alongside !" and the young man went to the gangway. As he departed, Danglars approached, and said,—

"Well, it appears that he has given you satisfactory reasons for his landing at Porto-Ferraio?"

"Yes, most satisfactory, my dear Danglars."

"Well, so much the better," said the supercargo ; "for it is always painful to see a comrade who does not do his duty."

"Dantès has done his," replied the owner, "and that is not saying much. It was Captain Leclere who gave orders for this delay."

"Talking of Captain Leclere, has not Dantès given you a letter from him?"

"To me?—no—was there one?"

"I believe that, besides the packet, Captain Leclere had confided a

letter to his son."

"Right, Dantès, quite right. I always knew you were a good son."

"And," inquired Dantès, with some hesitation, "do you know how my father is?"

"Well, I believe, my dear Edmond, though I have not seen him lately."

"Yes, he likes to keep himself shut up in his little room."

"That proves, at least, that he has wanted for nothing during your absence."

"Dantès smiled. "My father is proud, sir; and if he had not a meal left, I doubt if he would have asked anything from any one, except God."

"Well, then, after this first visit has been made we rely on you."

"I must again excuse myself, M. Morrel; for after this first visit has been paid I have another, which I am most anxious to pay."

"True, Dantès, I forgot that there was at the Catalans some one who expects you no less impatiently than your father—the lovely Mercédès." —Dantès blushed.

"Ah! ah!" said the shipowner, "that does not astonish me, for she has been to me three times, inquiring if there were any news of the *Pharaon*. Peste! Edmond, you have a very handsome mistress!"

"She is not my mistress," replied the young sailor, gravely; "she is my betrothed."

"Sometimes one and the same thing," said Morrel, with a smile.

"Not with us, sir," replied Dantès.

"Well, well, my dear Edmond," continued the owner, "do not let me detain you. You have managed my affairs so well that I ought to allow you all the time you require for your own. Do you want any money?"

"No, sir; I have all my pay to take—nearly three months' wages."

"You are a careful fellow, Edmond."

"Say I have a poor father, sir."

"Yes, yes, I know how good a son you are, so now haste away to see your father. I have a son too, and I should be very wroth with those who detained him from me after a three months' voyage."

"Then I have your leave, sir?"

"Yes, if you have nothing more to say to me."—"Nothing."

"Captain Leclerc did not, before he died, give you a letter for me?"

"He was unable to write, sir. But that reminds me that I must ask your leave of absence for some days."

"To get married?"—"Yes, first, and then to go to Paris."

"Very good; have what time you require, Dantès. It will take quite six weeks to unload the cargo, and we cannot get you ready for sea until three months after that; only be back again in three months, for the *Pharaon*," added the owner, patting the young sailor on the back, "cannot sail without her captain."

"Without her captain!" cried Dantès, his eyes sparkling with animation; "pray mind what you say, for you are touching on the most secret wishes of my heart. Is it really your intention to nominate me captain of the *Pharaon*?"

"If I were sole owner I would nominate you this moment, my dear Dantès, and say it is settled; but I have a partner, and you know the Italian proverb—*Chi ha compagno ha padrone*—'He who has a partner has a master.' But the thing is at least half done, as you have one out of two voices. Rely on me to procure you the other; I will do my best."

"Ah! M. Morrel," exclaimed the young seaman, with tears in his eyes, and grasping the owner's hand, "M. Morrel, I thank you in the name of my father and of Mercédès."

"Good, good ! Edmond. There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft that keeps a good watch for good fellows ! Go to your father : go and see Mercédès, and come to me afterwards."

"Shall I row you on shore ?"

"No, I thank you ; I shall remain and look over the accounts with Danglars. Have you been satisfied with him this voyage ?"

"That is according to the sense you attach to the question, sir. Do you mean, he is a good comrade ? No, for I think he never liked me since the day when I was silly enough, after a little quarrel we had, to propose to him to stop for ten minutes at the isle of Monte-Cristo to settle the dispute—a proposition which I was wrong to suggest, and he quite right to refuse. If you mean as responsible agent that you ask me the question, I believe there is nothing to say against him, and that you will be content with the way in which he has performed his duty."

"But tell me, Dantès, if you had the command of the *Pharaon* should you have pleasure in retaining Danglars ?"

"Captain or mate, M. Morrel," replied Dantès, "I shall always have the greatest respect for those who possess our owners' confidence."

"Good ! good ! Dantès. I see you are a thorough good fellow, and will detain you no longer. Go, for I see how impatient you are."

"Then I have leave ?"—"Go, I tell you."

"May I have the use of your skiff ?"—"Certainly."

"Then, for the present, M. Morrel, farewell, and a thousand thanks !"

"I hope soon to see you again, my dear Edmond. Good luck to you !"

The young sailor jumped into the skiff, and sat down in the stern, desiring to be put ashore at the Canebière. The two rowers bent to their work, and the little boat glided away as rapidly as possible in the midst of the thousand vessels which choke up the narrow way which leads between

This apartment was occupied by Dantès' father. The news of the arrival of the *Pharaon* had not yet reached the old man, who mounted on a chair, was amusing himself with staking some nasturtiums with tremulous hand, which, mingled with clematis, formed a kind of trellis at his window. Suddenly, he felt an arm thrown round his body, and a well-known voice behind him exclaimed, "Father! dear father!"

The old man uttered a cry, and turned round; then, seeing his son, he fell into his arms, pale and trembling.

"What ails you, my dearest father? Are you ill?" inquired the young man, much alarmed.

"No, no, my dear Edmond—my boy—my son!—no; but I did not expect you; and joy, the surprise of seeing you so suddenly—Ah! I really seem as if I were going to die."

"Come, come, cheer up, my dear father! 'Tis I—really I! They say joy never hurts, and so I come to you without any warning. Come now, look cheerfully at me, instead of gazing as you do with your eyes so wide. Here I am back again, and we will now be happy."

"Yes, yes, my boy, so we will—so we will," replied the old man; "but how shall we be happy? Will you never leave me again? Come, tell me all the good fortune that has befallen you."

"God forgive me," said the young man, "for rejoicing at happiness derived from the misery of others; but, Heaven knows, I did not seek this good fortune: it has happened, and I really cannot affect to lament it. The good Captain Leclerc is dead, father, and it is probable that, with the aid of M. Morrel, I shall have his place. Do you understand, father? Only imagine me a captain at twenty, with a hundred louis pay, and a share in the profits! Is this not more than a poor sailor like me could have hoped for?"

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the old man, "and much more than you could have expected."

"Well, then, with the first money I touch, I mean you to have a small house, with a garden to plant your clematis, your nasturtiums, and your honeysuckles. But what ails you, father? Are not you well?"

"'Tis nothing, nothing; it will soon pass away;" and as he said so the old man's strength failed him, and he fell backwards.

"Come, come," said the young man, "a glass of wine, father, will revive you. Where do you keep your wine?"

"No, no; thank ye. You need not look for it; I do not want it," said the old man.

"Yes, yes, father, tell me where it is," and he opened two or three cupboards.

"It is no use," said the old man, "there is no wine."

"What! no wine?" said Dantès, turning pale, and looking alternately at the hollow cheeks of the old man and the empty cupboards. "What! no wine? Have you wanted money, father?"

"I want nothing since I see you," said the old man.

"Yet," stammered Dantès, wiping the perspiration from his brow,— "yet I gave you two hundred francs when I left, three months ago."

"Yes, yes, Edmond, that is true, but you forgot at that time a little debt to our neighbour, Caderousse. He reminded me of it, telling me if I did not pay for you, he would be paid by M. Morrel; and so, you see, lest he might do you an injury—"

"Well?"—"Why, I paid him."

"But," cried Dantès, "it was a hundred and forty francs I owed Caderousse."

"Yes," stammered the old man.

"And you paid him out of the two hundred francs I left you?"

The old man made a sign in the affirmative.

"So that you have lived for three months on sixty francs?" muttered the young man.

"You know how little I require," said the old man.

"Heaven pardon me," cried Edmond, going on his knees before the old man.

"What are you doing?"

"You have wounded my very heart."

"Never mind it, for I see you once more," said the old man; "and now all is forgotten—all is well again."

"Yes, here I am," said the young man, "with a happy prospect and a little money. Here, father! here!" he said, "take this—take it, and send for something immediately." And he emptied his pockets on the table, whose contents consisted of a dozen pieces of gold, five or six crowns, and some smaller coin. The countenance of old Dantès brightened.

"Whom does this belong to?" he inquired.

"To me! to you! to us! Take it; buy some provisions; be happy, and to-morrow we shall have more."

"Gently, gently," said the old man, with a smile; "and by your leave I will use your purse moderately, for they would say, if they saw me buy too many things at a time, that I had been obliged to await your return, in order to be able to purchase them."

"Do as you please; but, first of all, pray have a servant, father. I will not have you left alone so long. I have some smuggled coffee and most capital tobacco, in a small chest in the hold, which you shall have to-morrow. But, hush! here comes somebody."

" 'I thought you were at Smyrna,'—'I was ; but am now back again.

" 'And where is the dear boy, our little Edmond ?'

" 'Why, with his father, no doubt,' replied Danglars. And so I came,' added Caderousse, "as fast as I could to have the pleasure of shaking hands with a friend."

"Worthy Caderousse!" said the old man, "he is so much attached to us!"

"Yes, to be sure I am. I love and esteem you, because honest folks are so rare! But it seems you have come back rich, my boy," continued the tailor, looking askance at the handful of gold and silver which Dantès had thrown on the table.

The young man remarked the greedy glance which shone in the dark eyes of his neighbour. "Eh!" he said, negligently, "this money is not mine: I was expressing to my father my fears that he had wanted many things in my absence, and to convince me he emptied his purse on the table. Come, father," added Dantès, "put this money back in your box—unless neighbour Caderousse wants anything, and in that case it is at his service."

"No, my boy, no," said Caderousse. "I am not in any want, thank God! the state nourishes me. Keep your money—keep it, I say;—one never has too much;—but, at the same time, my boy, I am as much obliged by your offer as if I took advantage of it."

"It was offered with good will," said Dantès.

"No doubt, my boy; no doubt. Well, you stand well with M. Morrel I hear,—you insinuating dog, you!"

"M. Morrel has always been exceedingly kind to me," replied Dantès.

"Then you were wrong to refuse to dine with him."

"What! did you refuse to dine with him?" said old Dantès; "and did he invite you to dine?"

"Yes, my dear father," replied Edmond, smiling at his father's astonishment at the excessive honour paid to his son.

"And why did you refuse, my son?" inquired the old man.

"That I might the sooner see you again, my dear father," replied the young man. "I was most anxious to see you."

"But it must have vexed M. Morrel, good, worthy man," said Caderousse. "And when you are looking forward to be captain, it was wrong to annoy the owner."

"But I explained to him the cause of my refusal," replied Dantès; "and I hope he fully understood it."

"Yes, but to be captain one must give way a little to one's patrons."

"I hope to be captain without that," said Dantès.

"So much the better—so much the better! Nothing will give greater pleasure to all your old friends; and I know one down there behind the citadel of Saint Nicolas, who will not be sorry to hear it."

"Mercédès?" said the old man.

"Yes, my dear father, and with your permission, now I have seen you, and know you are well, and have all you require, I will ask your consent to go and pay a visit to the Catalans."

"Go, my dear boy," said old Dantès; "and heaven bless you in your wife, as it has blessed me, my son!"

"His wife!" said Caderousse; "why, how fast you go on, father Dantès; she is not his wife yet, it appears."

"No, but according to all probability she soon will be," replied Edmond.

"Yes—yes," said Caderousse; "but you were right to return as soon as possible, my boy."

"And why?"—"Because Mercédès is a very fine girl, and fine girls never lack lovers; she, particularly, has them by dozens."

"Really?" answered Edmond, with a smile which had in it traces of slight uneasiness.

"Ah, yes," continued Caderousse, "and capital offers, too; but you know, you will be captain, and who could refuse you then?"

"Meaning to say," replied Dantès, with a smile which but ill-concealed his trouble, "that if I were not a captain——"

"Eh—eh!" said Caderousse, shaking his head.

"Come, come," said the sailor, "I have a better opinion than you of women in general, and of Mercédès in particular; and I am certain that, captain or not, she will remain ever faithful to me."

"So much the better—so much the better," said Caderousse. "When one is going to be married, there is nothing like implicit confidence; but never mind that, my boy,—but go and announce your arrival, and let her know all your hopes and prospects."

"I will go directly," was Edmond's reply; and, embracing his father, and saluting Caderousse, he left the apartment.

Caderousse lingered for a moment, then taking leave of old Dantès, he went downstairs to rejoin Danglars, who awaited him at the corner of the Rue Senac.

"Well," said Danglars, "did you see him?"

"I have just left him," answered Caderousse.

"Did he allude to his hope of being captain?"

"He spoke of it as a thing already decided."

"Patience!" said Danglars, "he is in too much hurry, it appears to me."

"Why, it seems M. Morrel has promised him the thing."

"So that he is quite elate about it."

"What do you know?—come tell me!"

"Well, every time I have seen Mercédès come into the city, she has been accompanied by a tall, strapping, black-eyed Catalan, with a red complexion, brown skin, and fierce air, whom she calls cousin."

"Really; and you think this cousin pays her attentions?"

"I only suppose so. What else can a strapping chap of twenty-one mean with a fine wench of seventeen?"

"And you say Dantès has gone to the Catalans?"

"He went before I came down."

"Let us go the same way; we will stop at La Réserve, and we can drink a glass of La Malue, whilst we wait for news."

"Come along," said Caderousse; "but mind you pay the shot."

"Certainly," replied Danglars; and going quickly to the spot alluded to, they called for a bottle of wine, and two glasses.

Père Pamphile had seen Dantès pass not ten minutes before; and assured that he was at the Catalans, they sat down under the budding foliage of the planes and sycamores, in the branches of which the birds were joyously singing on a lovely day in early spring.

CHAPTER III.

THE CATALANS.

ABOUT a hundred paces from the spot where the two friends were, with their looks fixed on the distance, and their ears attentive, whilst they imbibed the sparkling wine of La Malue, behind a bare, and torn, and weather-worn wall, was the small village of the Catalans. One day a mysterious colony quitted Spain, and settled on the tongue of land, on which it is to this day. It arrived from no one knew where, and spoke an unknown tongue. One of its chiefs, who understood Provençal, begged the commune of Marseilles to give them this bare and barren promontory, on which, like the sailors of the ancient times, they had run their boats ashore. The request was granted; and three months afterwards, around the twelve or fifteen small vessels which had brought these gipsies of the sea, a small village sprang up. This village, constructed in a singular and picturesque manner, half Moorish, half Spanish, is that we behold at the present day inhabited by the descendants of those men who speak the language of their fathers. For three or four centuries they remained faithful to this small promontory, on which they had settled like a flight of sea-birds, without mixing with the Marseillaise population, intermarrying, and preserving their original customs and the costume of their mother-country, as they have preserved its language.

Our readers will follow us along the only street of this little village, and enter with us into one of the houses, on the outside of which the sun had stamped that beautiful colour of the dead leaf peculiar to the buildings of the country, and within, a coat of limewash, of that white tint which forms the only ornament of Spanish posadas. A young and beautiful girl, with hair as black as jet, her eyes as velvety as the gazelle's, was leaning with her back against the wainscot, rubbing in her slender fingers, moulded after the antique, a bunch of heath blossoms, the flowers of which she was picking off, and strewing on the floor; her arms bare to the elbow, embrowned, and resembling those of the Venus at Arles, moved with a kind of restless impatience, and she tapped the earth with her pliant and

well-formed foot, so as to display the pure and full shape of her well-turned leg, in its red cotton stocking with grey and blue clocks. At three paces from her, seated in a chair which he balanced on two legs, leaning his elbow on an old worm-eaten table, was a tall young man of twenty or two-and-twenty, who was looking at her with an air in which vexation and uneasiness were mingled. He questioned her with his eyes, but the firm and steady gaze of the young girl controlled his look.

"You see, Mercédès," said the young man, "here is Easter come round again ; tell me, is this the moment for a wedding ?"

"I have answered you a hundred times, Fernand : and really you must be your own enemy to ask me again."

"Well, repeat it,—repeat it, I beg of you, that I may at last believe it ! Tell me for the hundredth time that you refuse my love, which had your mother's sanction. Make me fully comprehend that you are trifling with my happiness, that my life or death are immaterial to you. Ah ! to have dreamed for ten years of being your husband, Mercédès, and to lose that hope, which was the only stay of my existence !"

"At least it was not I who ever encouraged you in that shape, Fernand," replied Mercédès ; "you cannot reproach me with the slightest coquetry. I have always said to you, 'I love you as a brother ; but do not ask from me more than sisterly affection, for my heart is another's.' Is not this true, Fernand ?"

"Yes, I know it well, Mercédès," replied the young man. "Yes, you have been cruelly frank with me ; but do you forget that it is among the Catalans a sacred law to intermarry ?"

"You mistake, Fernand, it is not a law, but merely a custom ; and, I pray of you, do not cite this custom in your favour. You are included in the conscription, Fernand, and are only at liberty on sufferance, liable at

"You could do no such thing, Fernand ; you are a soldier, and if you remain at the Catalans it is because there is not a war ; so remain a fisherman, and contented with my friendship, as I cannot give you more."

"Well, you are right, Mercédès. I will be a sailor ; instead of the costume of our fathers, which you despise, I will wear a varnished hat, a striped shirt, and a blue jacket, with an anchor on the buttons. Would not that dress please you?"

"What do you mean?" asked Mercédès, darting at him an angry glance,— "what do you mean? I do not understand you."

"I mean, Mercédès, that you are thus harsh and cruel with me, because you are expecting some one who is thus attired ; but, perhaps, he whom you await is inconstant, or if he is not, the sea is so to him."

"Fernand !" cried Mercédès, "I believed you were good-hearted, and I was mistaken ! Fernand, you are wicked to call to your aid jealousy and the anger of God ! Yes, I will not deny it, I do await, and I do love him to whom you allude ; and, if he does not return, instead of accusing him of the inconstancy which you insinuate, I will tell you that he died loving me and me only." The young Catalan made a gesture of rage.

"I understand you, Fernand ; you would be revenged on him because I do not love you ; you would cross your Catalan knife with his dirk. What end would that answer? To lose you my friendship if he were conquered, and see that friendship changed into hate if you were conqueror. Believe me, to seek a quarrel with a man is a bad method of pleasing the woman who loves that man. No, Fernand, you will not thus give way to evil thoughts. Unable to have me for your wife, you will content yourself with having me for your friend and sister ; and besides," she added, her eyes troubled and moistened with tears, "wait, wait, Fernand ; you said just now that the sea was treacherous, and he has been gone four months, and during these four months we have had some terrible storms."

Fernand made no reply, nor did he attempt to check the tears which flowed down the cheeks of Mercédès, although for each of these tears he would have shed his heart's blood ; but these tears flowed for another. He arose, paced awhile up and down the hut, and then, suddenly stopping before Mercédès, with his eyes glowing and his hands clenched,— "Say, Mercédès," he said, "once for all, is this your final determination?"

"I love Edmond Dantès," the young girl calmly replied, "and none but Edmond shall ever be my husband."

"And you will always love him?"—"As long as I live."

Fernand let fall his head like a defeated man, heaved a sigh which resembled a groan, and then suddenly looking her full in the face, with clenched teeth and expanded nostrils, said,— "But if he is dead——"

"If he is dead, I shall die too."

"If he has forgotten you——"

"Mercédès !" cried a voice, joyously, outside the house,— "Mercédès !"

"Ah !" exclaimed the young girl, blushing with delight, and springing up with love, "you see he has not forgotten me, for here he is !" And rushing towards the door, she opened it, saying, "Here, Edmond, here I am !"

Fernand, pale and trembling, receded like a traveller at the sight of a serpent, and fell into a chair beside him. Edmond and Mercédès were clasped in each other's arms. The burning sun of Marseilles, which penetrated the room by the open door, covered them with a flood of light. At first they saw nothing around them. Their intense happiness isolated them from all the rest of the world, and they only spoke in broken words,

which are the tokens of a joy so extreme that they seem rather the expression of sorrow. Suddenly Edmond saw the gloomy countenance of Fernand, as it was defined in the shadow, pale and threatening, and by a movement, for which he could scarcely account to himself, the young Catalan placed his hand on the knife at his belt.

"Ah! your pardon," said Dantès, frowning in his turn; "I did not perceive that there were three of us." Then, turning to Mercédès, he inquired, "Who is this gentleman?"

"One who will be your best friend, Dantès, for he is my friend, my cousin, my brother; it is Fernand—the man whom, after you, Edmond, I love the best in the world. Do you not remember him?"

"Yes!" said Edmond, and without relinquishing Mercédès' hand clasped in one of his own, he extended the other to the Catalan with a cordial air. But Fernand, instead of responding to this amiable gesture, remained mute and trembling. Edmond then cast his eyes scrutinizingly at Mercédès, agitated and embarrassed, and then again on Fernand, gloomy and menacing. This look told him all, and his brow became suffused and angry.

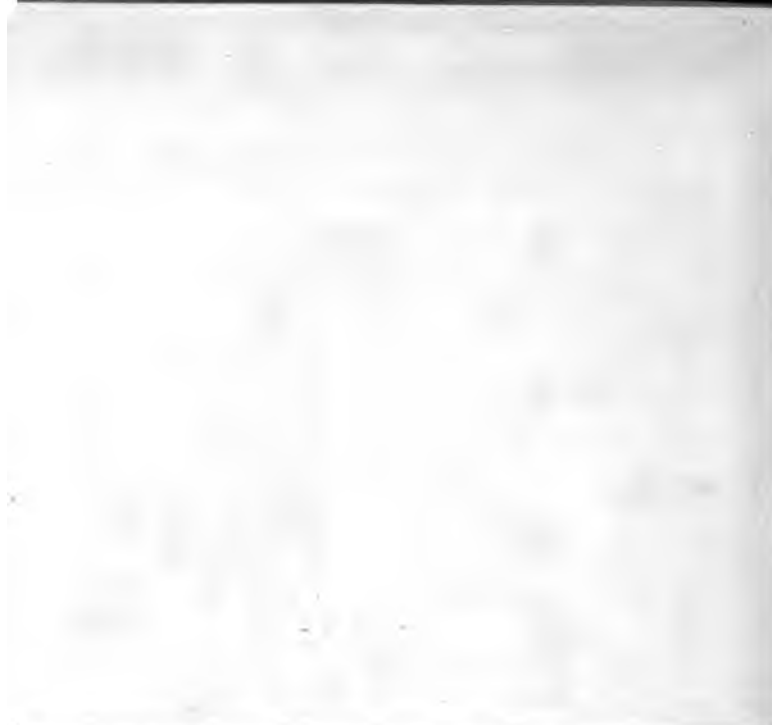
"I did not know, when I came with such haste to you, that I was to meet an enemy here."

"An enemy!" cried Mercédès, with an angry look at her cousin. "An enemy in my house, do you say, Edmond! If I believed that, I would place my arm under yours and go with you to Marseilles, leaving the house to return to it no more."

Fernand's eye darted lightning. "And should any misfortune occur to you, dear Edmond," she continued, with the same calmness which proved to Fernand that the young girl had read the very innermost depths of his sinister thought, "if misfortune should occur to you, I would ascend the highest point of the Cape de Morgion, and cast myself headlong from it."



DANTES AND MERCEDES.



Fernand wiped away the perspiration steaming from his brow, and slowly entered the arbour, whose shade seemed to restore somewhat of calmness to his senses, and whose coolness somewhat of refreshment to his exhausted body.

"Good day," said he. "You called me, didn't you?" And he fell, rather than sat down, on one of the seats which surrounded the table.

"I called you because you were running like a madman, and I was afraid you would throw yourself into the sea;" said Caderousse, laughing. "Why! when a man has friends, they are not only to offer him a glass of wine, but, moreover, to prevent his swallowing three or four pints of water unnecessarily!"

Fernand gave a groan, which resembled a sob, and dropped his head into his hands, his elbows leaning on the table.

"Well, Fernand, I must say," said Caderousse, beginning the conversation, with that brutality of the common people in which curiosity destroys all diplomacy, "you look uncommonly like a rejected lover;" and he burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Bah!" said Danglars, "a lad of his make was not born to be unhappy in love. You are laughing at him, Caderousse!"

"No," he replied, "only hark how he sighs! Come, come, Fernand!" said Caderousse, "hold up your head, and answer us. It's not polite not to reply to friends who ask news of your health."

"My health is well enough," said Fernand, clenching his hands without raising his head.

"Ah! you see, Danglars," said Caderousse, winking at his friend, "this it is; Fernand, whom you see here, is a good and brave Catalan, one of the best fishermen in Marseilles, and he is in love with a very fine girl, named Mercédès; but it appears, unfortunately, that the fine girl is in love with the second in command on board the *Pharaon*; and, as the *Pharaon* arrived to-day—why, you understand!"

"No, I do not understand," said Danglars.

"Poor Fernand has been dismissed," continued Caderousse.

"Well, and what then?" said Fernand, lifting up his head, and looking at Caderousse like a man who looks for some one on whom to vent his anger; "Mercédès is not accountable to any person, is she? Is she not free to love whomsoever she will?"

"Oh! if you take it in that sense," said Caderousse, "it is another thing! But I thought you were a Catalan, and they told me the Catalans were not men to allow themselves to be supplanted by a rival. It was even told me that Fernand, especially, was terrible in his vengeance."

Fernand smiled piteously. "A lover is never terrible," he said.

"Poor fellow!" remarked Danglars, affecting to pity the young man from the bottom of his heart. "Why, you see, he did not expect to see Dantès return so suddenly! he thought he was dead, perhaps; or perchance faithless! These things always come on us more severely when they come suddenly."

"Ah, *ma foi*, under any circumstances!" said Caderousse, who drank as he spoke, and on whom the fumes of the wine of La Malue began to take effect,—"under any circumstances Fernand is not the only person put out by the fortunate arrival of Dantès; is he, Danglars?"

"No, you are right—and I should say that would bring him ill-luck."

"Well, never mind," answered Caderousse, pouring out a glass of wine for Fernand, and filling his own for the eighth or ninth time, whilst Danglars had merely sipped his. "Never mind—in the meantime he marries Mercédès—the lovely Mercédès—at least, he returns to do that."

During this time Danglars fixed his piercing glance on the young man, on whose heart Caderousse's words fell like molten lead.

"And when is the wedding to be?" he asked.

"Oh, it is not yet fixed!" murmured Fernand.

"No, but it will be," said Caderousse, "as surely as Dantès will be captain of the *Pharaon*—eh, Danglars?"

Danglars shuddered at this unexpected attack, and turned to Caderousse, whose countenance he scrutinised, to try and detect whether the blow was premeditated; but he read nothing but envy in a countenance already rendered brutal and stupid by drunkenness.

"Well," said he filling the glasses, "let us drink to Captain Edmond Dantès, husband of the beautiful Catalane!"

Caderousse raised his glass to his mouth with unsteady hand, and swallowed the contents at a gulp. Fernand dashed his on the ground.

"Eh! eh! eh!" stammered Caderousse. "What do I see down there by the wall, in the direction of the Catalans? Look, Fernand! your eyes are better than mine. I believe I see double. You know wine is a deceiver; but I should say it was two lovers walking side by side, and hand in hand. Heaven forgive me! they do not know that we can see them, and they are actually embracing!"

Danglars did not lose one pang that Fernand endured.

"Do you know them, M. Fernand?" he said.

"Yes," was the reply, in a low voice. "It is M. Edmond and Made-moiselle Mercédès!"

"Ah! see there, now!" said Caderousse; "and I did not recognise them! Holla, Dantès! holla, lovely damsel! Come this way, and let us know when the wedding is to be, for M. Fernand here is so obstinate he will not tell us!"

"Hold your tongue, will you?" said Danglars, pretending to restrain

Mercédès curtsayed gravely, and said—"That is not my name, and in my country it bodes ill fortune, they say, to call young girls by the name of their betrothed before he becomes their husband. Call me, then, Mercédès, if you please."

"We must excuse our worthy neighbour, Caderousse," said Dantès, "he is so easily mistaken."

"So, then, the wedding is to take place immediately, M. Dantès," said Danglars, bowing to the young couple.

"As soon as possible, M. Danglars; to day all preliminaries will be arranged at my father's, and to-morrow, or next day at latest, the wedding festival here at La Réserve. My friends will be there, I hope; that is to say, you are invited, M. Danglars, and you, Caderousse."

"And Fernand," said Caderousse with a chuckle; "Fernand, too, is invited!"

"My wife's brother is my brother," said Edmond; "and we, Mercédès and I, should be very sorry if he were absent at such a time."

Fernand opened his mouth to reply, but his voice died on his lips, and he could not utter a word.

"To-day the preliminaries, to-morrow or next day the ceremony! you are in a hurry, captain!"

"Danglars," said Edmond, smiling, "I will say to you as Mercédès said just now to Caderousse, 'Do not give me a title which does not belong to me;' that may bring me bad luck."

"Your pardon," replied Danglars, "I merely said you seemed in a hurry, and we have lots of time, the *Pharaon* cannot be under weigh again in less than three months."

"We are always in a hurry to be happy, M. Danglars; for when we have suffered a long time, we have great difficulty in believing in good fortune. But it is not selfishness alone that makes me thus in haste; I must go to Paris."

"To Paris! really! and will it be the first time you have ever been there, Dantès?"—"Yes."

"Have you business there?"—"Not of my own; the last commission of poor Captain Leclerc; you know to what I allude, Danglars—it is sacred. Besides, I shall only take the time to go and return."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said Danglars, and then in a low tone, he added, "To Paris, no doubt to deliver the letter which the Grand Marshal gave him. Ah! this letter gives me an idea—a capital idea! Ah! Dantès, my friend, you are not yet registered number one on board the good ship *Pharaon*," then turning towards Edmond, who was walking away, "Good journey," he cried.

"Thank ye," said Edmond with a friendly nod, and the two lovers continued their route, calm and joyous.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSPIRACY.

DANGLARS followed Edmond and Mercédès with his eyes until the two lovers disappeared behind one of the angles of Fort Saint Nicolas, then turning round, he perceived Fernand, who had fallen, pale and trembling into his chair, whilst Caderousse stammered out the words of a drinking-song.

"Well, my dear sir," said Danglars to Fernand, "here is a marriage which does not appear to make everybody happy."

"It drives me to despair," said Fernand.

"Do you, then, love Mercédès?"—"I adore her!"

"Have you loved her long?"—"Ever since I have known her."

"And you sit there, tearing your hair, instead of seeking to remedy your condition; I did not think it was thus your nation acted."

"What would you have me do?" said Fernand.

"How do I know? Is it my affair? I am not in love with Mademoiselle Mercédès; but for you—seek, and you shall find."

"I have found already."—"What?"

"I would stab the man, but the woman told me that if any misfortune happened to her betrothed, she would kill herself."

"Pooh! women say those things, but never do them."

"You do not know Mercédès; what she threatens she will do."

"Idiot!" muttered Danglars; "whether she kill herself or not what matter, provided Dantès is not captain?"

"Before Mercédès should die," replied Fernand, with the accents of unshaken resolution, "I would die myself!"

"That's what I call love!" said Caderousse with a voice more tipsy than ever. "That's love, or I don't know what love is."

"Come," said Danglars, "you appear to me a good sort of fellow, and hang me! but I should like to help you, but——"

"Yes," said Caderousse, "but how?"

"My dear fellow," replied Danglars, "you are three parts drunk; finish the bottle, and you will be completely so. Drink, then, and do not meddle with what we are discussing, for that requires all one's wit and cool judgment."

"I—drunk!" said Caderousse; "well, that's a good one! I could drink four more such bottles; they are no bigger than Eau-de-Cologne flasks. Père Pamphile, more wine!" and Caderousse rattled his glass upon the table.

"Yes ; only people get out of prison," said Caderousse, who, with what sense was left him, listened eagerly to the conversation, "and when they get out, and their names are Edmond Dantès, they revenge——"

"What matters that?" muttered Fernand.

"And why, I should like to know," persisted Caderousse, "should they put Dantès in prison? he has neither robbed, nor killed, nor murdered."

"Hold your tongue!" said Danglars.

"I won't hold my tongue!" replied Caderousse; "I say I want to know why they should put Dantès in prison; I like Dantès; Dantès, your health!" and he swallowed another glass of wine.

Danglars saw in the muddled look of the tailor the progress of his intoxication, and turning towards Fernand, said, "Well, you understand there is no need to kill him."

"Certainly not, if, as you said just now, you have the means of having Dantès arrested. Have you that means?"

"It is to be found for the searching. But why should I meddle in the matter? it is no affair of mine."

"I know not why you meddle," said Fernand, seizing his arm; "but this I know, you have some motive of personal hatred against Dantès, for he who himself hates is never mistaken in the sentiments of others."

"I! motives of hatred against Dantès? None, on my word! I saw you were unhappy, and your unhappiness interested me; that's all; but the moment you believe I act for my own account, adieu, my dear friend, get out of the affair as best you may;" and Danglars rose as if he meant to depart.

"No, no," said Fernand, restraining him, "stay! It is of very little consequence to me at the end of the matter whether you have any angry feeling or not against Dantès. I hate him! I confess it openly. Do you find the means, I will execute it, provided it is not to kill the man, for Mercédès has declared she will kill herself if Dantès is killed."

Caderousse, who had let his head drop on the table, now raised it, and looking at Fernand with his dull and fishy eyes, he said,—*"Kill Dantès! who talks of killing Dantès? I won't have him killed—I won't! He's my friend, and this morning offered to share his money with me, as I shared mine with him. I won't have Dantès killed—I won't!"*

"And who has said a word about killing him, muddlehead?" replied Danglars. "We were merely joking: drink to his health," he added, filling Caderousse's glass, "and do not interfere with us."

"Yes, yes, Dantès good health!" said Caderousse, emptying his glass: "here's to his health! his health!—hurrah!"

"But the means—the means?" said Fernand.—"Have you not hit upon any?"

"No!—you undertook to do so."

"True," replied Danglars; "the French have the superiority over the Spaniards, that the Spaniards ruminate, whilst the French invent."

"Do you invent, then?" said Fernand, impatiently.

"Waiter," said Danglars, "pen, ink, and paper."—"Pen, ink, and paper," muttered Fernand,

"Yes; I am a supercargo; pen, ink, and paper are my tools, and without my tools I am fit for nothing."

"Pen, ink, and paper!" then, called Fernand, loudly.

"All you require is a table," said the waiter, pointing to the writing materials.

"Bring them here." The waiter did as he was desired.

"When one thinks," said Caderousse, letting his hand drop on the paper, "there is here wherewithal to kill a man more sure than if we waited at the corner of a wood to assassinate him ! I have always had more dread of a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of paper, than of a sword or pistol."

"The fellow is not so drunk as he appears to be," said Danglars. "Give him some more wine, Fernand." Fernand filled Caderousse's glass, who, toper as he was, lifted his hand from the paper and seized the glass.

The Catalan watched him until Caderousse, almost overcome by this fresh assault on his senses, rested, or rather allowed his glass to fall upon the table.

"Well!" resumed the Catalan, as he saw the final glimmer of Caderousse's reason vanishing before the last glass of wine.

"Well, then, I should say, for instance," resumed Danglars, "that if after a voyage such as Dantès has just made, and in which he touched the isle of Elba, some one were to denounce him to the king's procureur as a Bonapartist agent——"

"I will denounce him!" exclaimed the young man, hastily.

"Yes, but they will make you then sign your declaration, and confront you with him you have denounced ; I will supply you with the means of supporting your accusation, for I know the fact well. But Dantès cannot remain for ever in prison, and one day or other he will leave it, and the day when he comes out, woe betide him who was the cause of his incarceration !"

"Oh, I should wish nothing better than that he would come and seek a quarrel with me."

"Yes, and Mercédès ! Mercédès, who will detest you if you have only the misfortune to scratch the skin of her dearly beloved Edmond !"

say and do is merely in jest, and I, amongst the first and foremost, should be sorry if anything happened to Dantès—the worthy Dantès—look here !” And taking the letter, he squeezed it up in his hands and threw it into a corner of the arbour.

“All right !” said Caderousse. “Dantès is my friend, and I won’t have him ill-used.”

“And who thinks of using him ill? Certainly neither I nor Fernand !” said Danglars, rising and looking at the young man, who still remained seated, but whose eye was fixed on the denunciatory sheet of paper flung into the corner.

“In this case,” replied Caderousse, “let’s have some more wine. I wish to drink to the health of Edmond and the lovely Mercédès.”

“You have had too much already, drunkard,” said Danglars ; “and if you continue, you will be compelled to sleep here, because unable to stand on your legs.”

“I ?” said Caderousse, rising with all the offended dignity of a drunken man, “I can’t keep on my legs ! Why, I’ll bet a wager I go up into the belfry of the Acoules, and without staggering, too !”

“Well done !” said Danglars, “I’ll take your bet ; but to-morrow—to-day it is time to return. Give me your arm, and let us go.”

“Very well, let us go,” said Caderousse ; “but I don’t want your arm at all. Come, Fernand, won’t you return to Marseilles with us ?”

“No,” said Fernand ; “I shall return to the Catalans.”

“You’re wrong. Come with us to Marseilles—come along.” — “I will not.”

“What do you mean ? you will not ? Well, just as you like, my prince ; there’s liberty for all the world. Come along, Danglars, and let the young gentleman return to the Catalans if he chooses.”

Danglars took advantage of Caderousse’s temper at the moment, to take him off towards Marseilles by the Porte Saint Victor, staggering as he went.

When they had advanced about twenty yards, Danglars looked back and saw Fernand stoop, pick up the crumpled paper, and putting it into his pocket, then rush out of the arbour towards Pilon.

“Well,” said Caderousse, “why, what a lie he told ! He said he was going to the Catalans, and he is going to the city. Holloa, Fernand !”

“Oh, you see wrong,” said Danglars ; “he’s gone right enough.”

“Well,” said Caderousse, “I should have said not—how treacherous wine is !”

“Come, come,” said Danglars to himself, “now the thing is at work and it will effect its purpose unassisted.”

CHAPTER V.

THE MARRIAGE-FEAST.

THE morning’s sun rose clear and resplendent, gilding the heavens, and even the foamy waves with its bright refulgent beams.

The plenteous feast had been prepared at La Réserve, with whose arbour the reader is already familiar. The apartment destined for the purpose was spacious and lighted by a number of windows, over each of which was written in golden letters the name of one of the principal cities of France ; beneath these windows a wooden balcony extended the entire length of the house. And although the entertainment was fixed for twelve o’clock at noon, an hour previous to that time the balcony was filled with impatient and expectant guests, consisting of the favoured part of the crew of the

Pharaon, and other personal friends of the bridegroom, the whole of whom had arrayed themselves in their choicest costumes, in order to do greater honour to the day.

Various rumours were afloat to the effect that the owners of the *Pharaon* had promised to attend the nuptial feast ; but all seemed unanimous in doubting that an act of such rare and exceeding condescension could possibly be intended.

Danglars, however, who now made his appearance, accompanied by Caderousse, effectually confirmed the report, stating that he had recently conversed with M. Morrel, who had himself assured him he intended joining the festive party upon the occasion of their second officer's marriage.

Even while relating this aloud, an enthusiastic burst of applause from the crew of the *Pharaon* announced the presence of M. Morrel, who hailed the visit of the shipowner as a sure indication that the man whose wedding-feast he thus delighted to honour would ere long be first in command of the *Pharaon* ; and as Dantès was universally beloved on board his vessel, the sailors put no restraint on the tumultuous joy at finding the opinion and choice of their superiors so exactly coincide with their own.

This noisy though hearty welcome over, Danglars and Caderousse were despatched to the residence of the bridegroom to convey to him the intelligence of the arrival of the important personage who had recently joined them, and to desire he would hasten to receive his honourable guest.

The above-mentioned individuals started off upon their errand at full speed ; but ere they had gone many steps they perceived a group advancing towards them, composed of the betrothed pair, a party of young girls in attendance on the bride, by whose side walked Dantès' father ; the whole brought up by Fernand, whose lips wore their usual sinister smile.

Neither Mercédès nor Edmond observed the strange expression of his

surround her with a circle, and seemed to invite all who saw
chold, and beholding, to rejoice with her in her exceeding hap-

liately the bridal *cortège* came in sight of La Réserve. M. Morrel
to meet it, followed by the soldiers and sailors there assembled,
he had repeated the promise already given, that Dantès should
cessor to the late Captain Leclerc. Edmond, at the approach of
on, respectfully placed the arm of his affianced bride within that
orrel, who, forthwith conducting her up the flight of wooden steps
o the chamber in which the feast was prepared, was gaily followed
guests, beneath whose thronging numbers the slight structure
and groaned as though alarmed at the unusual pressure.

er," said Mercédès, stopping when she had reached the centre of
," sit, I pray you, on my right hand ; on my left I will place him
ever been as a brother to me," pointing with a soft and gentle

Fernand ; but her words and look seemed to inflict the direst
n him, for his lips became ghastly pale, and even beneath the dark
s complexion the blood might be seen retreating as though some
ang drove it back to the heart.

; this time, Dantès, at the opposite side of the table, had been
in similarly placing his most honoured guests. M. Morrel was
his right hand, Danglars at his left ; while, at a sign from Ed-
e rest of the company ranged themselves as they found it most

ow commenced the work of devastation upon the many good
ith which the table was loaded. Sausages of Arles, with their
seasoning and piquant flavour, lobsters in their dazzling red
, prawns of large size and brilliant colour, the echinus, with its
outside and dainty morsel within ; the clovis, esteemed by the
of the south as more than rivalling the exquisite flavour of the
All these, in conjunction with the numerous delicacies cast up
rash of waters on the sandy beach, and styled by the grateful
"sea fruits," served to furnish forth this marriage-table.

"The feast," said the old father of the bridegroom, as he

"Why, what ails you?" asked he of Edmond. "Do you fear any approaching evil? I should say that you were the happiest man alive at this instant."

"And that is the very thing that alarms me," returned Dantès. "Man does not appear to me to be intended to enjoy felicity so unmixed; happiness is like the enchanted palaces we read of in our childhood, where fierce, fiery dragons defend the entrance and approach; and monsters of all shapes and kinds, requiring to be overcome ere victory is ours. I own that I am lost in wonder to find myself promoted to an honour of which I feel myself unworthy—that of being the husband of Mercédès."

"Nay, nay!" cried Caderousse, smiling, "you have not attained that honour yet. Mercédès is not yet your wife. Just assume the tone and manner of a husband, and see how she will remind you that your hour is not yet come!"

The bride blushed, and seemed half-inclined to be angry; while Fernand, restless and uneasy, seemed to start at every fresh sound, occasionally applying his handkerchief to his brow to wipe away the large drops of perspiration that gathered again, almost as soon as they were removed.

"Well, never mind that, neighbour Caderousse; it is not worth while to contradict me for such a trifle as that. 'Tis true that Mercédès is not actually my wife; but," added he, drawing out his watch, "in an hour and a half from this she will be as fast and firm as Holy Church can make her."

A general exclamation of surprise ran round the table, with the exception of the elder Dantès, whose laugh displayed the still perfect beauty of his large white teeth. Mercédès looked pleased and gratified, while Fernand grasped the handle of his knife with a convulsive clutch.

"In an hour?" inquired Danglars, turning pale. "How is that, my friend?"

"In an hour," replied Dantès. "The last time I saw her, she was in the arms of the Count of Monte-Cristo."

in that shabby manner. To-morrow morning I start for Paris : five days to go, and the same to return, with one day to discharge the commission entrusted to me, is all the time I shall be absent. I shall be back here by the 12th of March, and the next day I give my real marriage feast."

This prospect of fresh festivity redoubled the hilarity of the guests to such a degree, that the elder Dantès, who, at the commencement of the repast, had commented upon the silence that prevailed, now found it difficult, amid the general din of voices, to obtain a moment's tranquillity in which to drink to the health and prosperity of the bride and bridegroom.

Dantès, perceiving the affectionate eagerness of his father, responded by a look of grateful pleasure ; while Mercédès, whose eyes had been constantly consulting the pendule which decked the chamber, made an expressive gesture to Edmond.

Around the festive board reigned that mirthful freedom from all restraint which is usually found at the termination of social meetings, among those, at least, whose inferior station in the world gives them a happy dispensation from the frigid rules of etiquette ; and so it was with the party now assembled. Such as at the commencement of the repast had not been able to seat themselves according to their inclination, rose unceremoniously, and exchanged their place for the more immediate proximity of some preferred individual, male or female, as the case might be. All spoke at the same time, and yet none heeded a reply, but appeared as though merely addressing their own thoughts.

The paleness of Fernand appeared to have communicated itself to Danglars. As for Fernand himself, he seemed as though undergoing the tortures of the damned : unable to rest, he was among the first to quit the table, and, as though seeking to avoid the hilarious mirth that rose in such deafening sounds, he continued, in utter silence, to pace the farther end of the salon.

Caderousse approached him just as Danglars, whom Fernand seemed most anxious to avoid, had joined him in a corner of the room.

"Upon my word," said Caderousse, from whose mind the friendly treatment of Dantès, united with the effect of the excellent wine he had partaken of, had effaced every feeling of envy or jealousy at Dantès' good fortune,—“upon my word, Dantès is a downright good fellow, and when I see him sitting there beside his pretty wife that is so soon to be, I cannot help thinking it would have been a great pity to have served him that trick you were planning yesterday."

"Oh, there was no harm meant!" answered Danglars ; "at first I certainly did feel somewhat uneasy as regarded what Fernand might be tempted to do ; but when I saw how completely he had mastered his feelings, even so far as to become one of his rival's bridesmen, I knew there was no further cause for apprehension." Caderousse looked full at Fernand—he was ghastly pale.

"Certainly," continued Danglar, "the sacrifice was no trifling one, when the beauty of the bride is concerned. Upon my soul, that future captain of mine is a lucky dog ! Gad ! I only wish he would let me take his place."

"Shall we not set forth?" asked the sweet, silvery voice of Mercédès ; "two o'clock has just struck, and you know we are expected at the Hôtel de Ville in a quarter of an hour."

"To be sure !—to be sure !" cried Dantès, eagerly quitting the table ; "let us go directly !"

His words were re-echoed by the whole party, who rose with a simultaneous cheer, and commenced forming themselves into procession.

At this moment Danglars, who had been incessantly observing every change in Fernand's look and manner, perceived him stagger and fall back, with an almost convulsive spasm, against a seat placed near one of the open windows. At the same instant the ear caught a sort of indistinct sound on the stairs, followed by the measured tread of soldiery, with the clanking of swords and military accoutrements ; then came a hum and buzz as of many voices, so as to deaden even the noisy mirth of the bridal party, among whom a vague feeling of curiosity and apprehension quelled every disposition to talk, and almost instantaneously the most deathlike stillness prevailed.

Nearer and nearer came those sounds of terror. Three distinct knocks, as though from the hilt of a sword, against the door, increased the fears of the before gay party. Each looked inquiringly in the countenance of his neighbour, while all wished themselves quietly and safely at home.

"I demand admittance," said a loud voice outside the room, "in the name of the law !" As no attempt was made to prevent it, the door was opened, and a magistrate, wearing his official scarf, presented himself, followed by four soldiers and a corporal. Uneasiness now yielded to the most extreme dread on the part of those present.

"May I venture to inquire the reason of this unexpected visit?" said M. Morrel, addressing the magistrate, whom he evidently knew ; "there is doubtless some mistake easily explained."

"If it be so," replied the magistrate, "rely upon every reparation being made ; meanwhile, I am the bearer of an order of arrest, and although I most reluctantly perform the task assigned me, it must, nevertheless, be fulfilled. Who among the persons here assembled answers to the name of Edmond Dantès?" Every eye was turned towards the individual so de-

accuracy. The painful catastrophe he had just witnessed appeared effectually to have rent away the veil which the intoxication of the evening before had raised between himself and his memory.

"So! so!" said he, in a hoarse and choking voice, to Danglars, "this, then, I suppose, is a part of the trick you were concerting yesterday? All I can say is, that if it be so, 'tis an ill turn, and well deserves to bring double evil on those who have projected it."

"Nonsense!" returned Danglars, "I tell you again I have nothing whatever to do with it; besides, you know very well that I tore the paper to pieces."

"No, you did not!" answered Caderousse, "you merely threw it by—I saw it lying in a corner."—"Hold your tongue, you fool!—what should you know about it?—why, you were drunk!"

"Where is Fernand?" inquired Caderousse.—"How do I know?" replied Danglars; "gone, as every prudent man ought to do, to look after his own affairs, most likely. Never mind where he is, let you and I go and see what is to be done for our poor friends in this their affliction."

During this conversation, Dantès, after having exchanged a cheerful shake of the hand with all his sympathising friends, had surrendered himself to the officer sent to arrest him, merely saying, "Make yourselves quite easy, my good fellows, there is some little mistake to clear up, that's all, depend upon it! and very likely I may not have to go so far as the prison to effect that."

"Oh, to be sure!" responded Danglars, who had now approached the group, "nothing more than a mistake, I feel quite certain."

Dantès descended the staircase, preceded by the magistrate, and followed by the soldiers. A carriage awaited him at the door; he got in, followed by two soldiers and the magistrate, and the vehicle drove off towards Marseilles.

"Adieu! adieu! dearest Edmond!" cried Mercédès, stretching out her arms to him from the balcony.

The prisoner, whose ready ear caught the despairing accents of his betrothed, felt as though the chill hand of death pressed on his heart, as leaning from the coach he tried to reply in cheerful tones—"Good-bye, my sweet Mercédès!—we shall soon meet again!" The rapid progress of the vehicle, which disappeared round one of the turnings of Fort Saint Nicolas, prevented his adding more.

"Wait for me here, all of you!" cried M. Morrel; "I will take the first conveyance I find, and hurry to Marseilles, whence I will bring you word how all is going on."

"That's right!" exclaimed a multitude of voices; "go, and return as quickly as you can!"

This second departure was followed by a long and fearful state of terrified silence on the part of those who were left behind. The old father and Mercédès remained for some time apart, each absorbed in their separate griefs; but at length the two poor victims of the same blow raised their eyes, and with a simultaneous burst of feeling rushed into each other's arms.

Meanwhile Fernand made his reappearance, poured out for himself a glass of water with a trembling hand; then hastily swallowing it, went to sit down on the first vacant chair he perceived, and this was, by mere chance, placed next to the seat on which poor Mercédès had fallen half fainting, when released from the warm and affectionate embrace of old Dantès. Instinctively Fernand drew back his chair.

"He is the cause of all this misery--I am quite sure of it," whispered Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off Fernand, to Danglars.

"I really do not think so," answered the other; "he is too stupid to imagine such a scheme. I only hope the mischief will fall upon the head of whoever wrought it."

"You don't mention those who aided and abetted the cruel deed, any more than those who advised it," said Caderousse.

"Surely," answered Danglars, "one cannot be expected to become responsible for all the idle words one may have been obliged to listen to in the course of our lives." Meantime the subject of the arrest was being canvassed in every different form.

"What think you, Danglars," said one of the party, turning towards him, "of the late unfortunate event?"

"Why, upon my word, I know not what to say," replied he. "I think, however, that it is just possible Dantès may have been detected with some trifling article on board ship considered here as contraband."

"But how could he have done so without your knowledge, Danglars, who was the ship's supercargo?"

"Why, as for that, I could only know what I was told respecting the merchandise with which the vessel was laden. I know she was loaded with cotton, and that she took in her freight at Alexandria from the magazine of M. Pastret, and at Smyrna from M. Pascal's; that is all I was obliged to know, and I beg I may not be asked for any further particulars."

"Now I recollect!" said the afflicted old father; "my poor boy told me yesterday he had got a small case of coffee, and another of tobacco for me!"

"There you see!" exclaimed Danglars. "Now the mischief is out; depend upon it the custom-house people went rummaging about the ship in our absence, and discovered poor Dantès' hidden treasures."

trick you spoke of last night has been played off, I see ; but I cannot suffer a poor old man or an innocent girl to die of grief through your fault. I am determined to tell them all about it."

"Be silent, you simpleton !" cried Danglars, grasping him by the arm, "or I will not answer even for your own safety. Who can tell whether Dantès be innocent or guilty? The vessel did touch at Elba, where he quitted it, and passed a whole day in the island. Now, should any letters or other documents of a compromising character be found upon him, will it not be taken for granted that all who uphold him are his accomplices?"

With the rapid instinct of selfishness, Caderousse readily perceived the solidity of this mode of reasoning ; he gazed, doubtfully, wistfully on Danglars, and then insensibly continued to retreat from the dangerous proximity in which he found himself.

"Suppose we wait a while, and see what comes of it !" said he, casting a bewildered look on his companion.

"To be sure !" answered Danglars. "Let us wait, by all means. If he be innocent, of course he will be set at liberty ; if guilty, why, it is no use involving ourselves in his conspiracy."

"Then let us go hence. I cannot stay to endure the sight of that old man's distress."

"With all my heart !" replied Danglars, but too pleased to find a partner in his retreat. "Let us take ourselves out of the way, and leave every one else to do the same thing, if they please."

After their departure, Fernand, who had now again become the only friend and protector poor Mercédès could find in this trying hour, led the weeping girl back to her home, which she had quitted with such different hopes and feelings in the morning, while some friends of Dantès conducted the poor heart-broken parent to his childless and dreary abode.

The rumour of Edmond's arrest as a Bonapartist agent was not slow in circulating throughout the city.

"Could you ever have credited such a thing, my dear Danglars ?" asked M. Morrel, as, on his return to the port for the purpose of gleanng fresh tidings of Dantès, he overtook his supercargo and Caderousse. "Could you have believed such a thing possible?"

"Why, you know I told you," replied Danglars, "that I considered the circumstance of his having anchored in the isle of Elba as a very suspicious circumstance."

"And did you mention these suspicions to any person beside myself?"

"Certainly not !" returned Danglars. Then added in a low whisper, "You understand that, on account of your uncle, M. Polican Morrel, who served under the other government, and who does not altogether conceal what he thinks on the subject, you are strongly suspected of regretting the abdication of Napoleon. I should have feared to injure both Edmond and yourself, had I divulged my own apprehensions to a soul. I am too well aware that though a subordinate, like myself, is bound to acquaint the ship-owner with everything that occurs, there are many things he ought most carefully to conceal from all else."

"Tis well, Danglars—'tis well !" replied M. Morrel. "You are a worthy fellow ; and I had already thought of your interests in the event of poor Edmond having become captain of the *Pharaon*."—"Is it possible you were so kind?"

"Yes, indeed ; I had previously inquired of Dantès what was his opinion of you, and if he should have any reluctance to continue you in your post, for somehow I have perceived a sort of coolness between you two that led

me to believe that he would rather have another in your place as super-cargo."—"And what was his reply?"

"That he certainly did think he had given you offence in an affair which he merely referred to without entering into particulars, but that whoever possessed the good opinion and confidence of the ship's owners would have his preference also."

"The hypocrite!" murmured Danglars between his teeth.

"Poor Dantès!" said Caderousse. "No one can deny his being a noble-hearted young fellow!"

"But in the midst of all our trouble," continued M. Morrel, "we must not forget that the *Pharaon* has at present no captain."

"Oh!" replied Danglars, "since we cannot leave this port for the next three months, let us hope that ere the expiration of that period Dantès will be set at liberty."—"Of that I entertain no doubt; but in the meantime what are we to do?"

"I am entirely at your service, M. Morrel," answered Danglars. "You know that I am as capable of managing a ship as the most experienced captain in the service; and it will be so far advantageous to you to accept my services, that upon Edmond's release from prison no further change will be requisite on board the *Pharaon* than for Dantès and myself each to resume our respective posts."

"Thanks! thanks! my good friend, for your excellent idea and acceptable proposition—that will smooth all difficulties. I fully authorise you at once to assume the command of the *Pharaon*, and look carefully to the unloading of her freight. Private misfortunes must never induce us to neglect public affairs."

"Depend upon my zeal and attention, M. Morrel; but when do you think it likely we may be permitted to visit our poor friend in his prison?"

"I will let you know that directly I have seen M. de Villefort, whom I

more. It seems, however, that I have unconsciously stumbled upon the truth."

"Still," argued Caderousse, "I would give a great deal if nothing of the kind had happened ; or, at least, that I had had no hand in it. You will see, Danglars, that it will turn out an unlucky job for both of us."

"Nonsense! If any harm comes of it, it should fall on the guilty person ; and that, you know, is Fernand. How can we be implicated in any way? All we have got to do is, to keep our own counsel, and remain perfectly quiet, not breathing a word to any living soul ; and you will see that the storm will pass away without in the least affecting us."

"Amen!" responded Caderousse, waving his hand in token of adieu to Danglars, and bending his steps towards the Allées de Meillan, moving his head to and fro, and muttering as he went, after the manner of one whose mind was overcharged with one absorbing idea.

"So far, then," said Danglars, mentally, "all has gone as I would have it. I am, temporarily, commander of the *Pharaon*, with the certainty of being permanently so, if that fool of a Caderousse can be persuaded to hold his tongue. My only fear is the chance of Dantès being released. But bah! he is in the hands of Justice ; and," added he, with a smile, "she will take her own." So saying, he leaped into a boat, desiring to be rowed on board the *Pharaon*, where M. Morrel had appointed to meet him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPUTY PROCUREUR DU ROI.

IN one of the large aristocratical mansions situated in the Rue du Grand Cours opposite the fountain of Medusa, a second marriage-feast was being celebrated, almost at the same hour with the ill-fated nuptial repast given by Dantès. In this case, however, although the occasion of the entertainment was similar, the company assembled formed a striking difference. Instead of a rude mixture of sailors, soldiers, and those belonging to the humble grade of life, the present *réunion* was composed of the very flower and *élite* of Marseilles society. Magistrates who had resigned their office during the usurper's reign ; officers who, scorning to fight under his banners, had offered their services to foreign powers, with younger members of the family, brought up to hate and execrate the man whom five years of exile would have converted into a martyr, and fifteen of restoration elevated to the rank of a demigod.

The guests were still at table, and the heated and energetic conversation that prevailed betrayed the violent and vindictive passions that then agitated each dweller of the South, where, unhappily, religious strife had long given increased bitterness to the violence of party feeling.

The emperor, now king of the petty isle of Elba, after having held sovereign sway over one half of the world, counting us, his subjects, a small population of twenty millions,—after having been accustomed to hear the "*Vive Napoléons*" of at least six times that number of human beings, uttered in nearly every language of the globe—was looked upon among the *haute société* of Marseilles as a ruined man, separated for ever from any fresh connection with France or claim to her throne.

The magistrates freely discussed their political views ; the military part of the company talked unreservedly of Moscow and Leipsic, while the females indulged in open comments upon the divorce of the Empress

Josephine. All seemed to evince that in this focus of royalism it was not over the downfall of one man they rejoiced, but in the bright and cheering prospect of a revived political existence for themselves.

An old man, decorated with the cross of Saint Louis, now rose and proposed the health of King Louis XVIII. This aged individual was the Marquis de Saint-Méran. This toast, recalling at once the patient exile of Hartwell and the peace-loving king of France, excited universal enthusiasm ; glasses were elevated in the air *à l'Anglais*, and the ladies, snatching their bouquets from their fair bosoms, strewed the table with their floral treasures. In a word, an almost poetical fervour prevailed.

"Ah !" said the Marquise de Saint-Méran, a woman with a stern, forbidding eye, though still noble and elegant-looking, despite her having reached her fiftieth year—"ah ! these revolutionists, who have driven us from those very possessions they afterwards purchased for a mere trifle during the Reign of Terror, would be compelled to own, were they here, that all true devotion was on our side, since we were content to follow the fortunes of a falling monarch, while they, on the contrary, made their fortune by worshipping the rising sun ; yes, yes, they could not help admitting that the king, for whom we sacrificed rank, wealth, and station was truly our 'Louis the well-beloved,' while their wretched usurper has been, and ever will be, to them their evil genius, their 'Napoleon the accursed.' Am I not right, Villefort ?"

"I beg your pardon, madame. I really must pray you to excuse me, but—in truth—I was not attending to the conversation."

"Marquise, marquise !" interposed the same elderly personage who had proposed the toast, "let the young people alone ; let me tell you, on one's wedding day there are more agreeable subjects of conversation than dry politics."

sists in the opposite character of the equality supported by these two men : the one advocates the equality that elevates, the other professes the equality that depresses ; the one brings a king within reach of the guillotine, the other elevates the people to a level with the throne. "Observe," said Villefort, smiling, "I do not mean to deny that both the individuals we have been referring to were revolutionary scoundrels, and that the 9th Thermidor and the 4th of April were lucky days for France, worthy of being gratefully remembered by every friend to monarchy and civil order ; and that explains how it comes to pass that, fallen, as I trust he is, for ever, Napoleon has still preserved a train of parasitical satellites. Still, marquise, it has been so with other usurpers : Cromwell, for instance, who was not half so bad as Napoleon, had his partisans and advocates."

"Do you know, Villefort, that you are talking in a most dreadfully revolutionary strain ? But I excuse it ; it is impossible to expect the son of a Girondin to be free from a small spice of the old leaven." A deep crimson suffused the countenance of Villefort.

"'Tis true, madame," answered he, "that my father was a Girondin, but he was not among the number of those who voted for the king's death ; he was an equal sufferer with yourself during the Reign of Terror, and had well-nigh lost his head on the same scaffold as your own father."

"True," replied the marquise, without wincing in the slightest degree at the tragical remembrance thus called up ; "but bear in mind, if you please, that our respective parents underwent persecution and proscription from diametrically opposite principles ; in proof of which I may remark, that while my family remained among the staunchest adherents of the exiled princes, your father lost no time in joining the new government ; and that after the Citizen Noirtier had become a Girondin, the Count Noirtier appeared as a senator and statesman."

"Dear mother," interposed Renée, "you know very well it was agreed that all these disagreeable reminiscences should for ever be laid aside."

"Suffer me, also, madame, to add my earnest request that you will kindly allow the veil of oblivion to cover and conceal the past. What avails retrospection and recrimination touching circumstances wholly past recall ? For my own part, I have laid aside even the name of my father, and altogether disown his political principles. He was—nay, probably may still be—a Bonapartist, and is called Noirtier ; I, on the contrary, am a stanch royalist, and style myself de Villefort. Let what may remain of revolutionary sap exhaust itself and die away with the old trunk, and condescend only to regard the young shoot which has started up at a distance from the parent tree, without having the power, any more than the wish, to separate entirely from the stock from which it sprung."

"Bravo, Villefort !" cried the marquis ; "excellently well said ! Come, now, I have hopes of obtaining what I have been for years endeavouring to persuade the marquise to promise, namely, a perfect amnesty and forgetfulness of the past."

"With all my heart," replied the marquise ; "let the past be for ever forgotten ! I promise you it affords *me* as little pleasure to revive it as it does you. All I ask is, that Villefort will be firm and inflexible for the future in marking his political principles. Remember also, Villefort, that we have pledged ourselves to his majesty for your fealty and strict loyalty, and that at our recommendation the king consented to forget the past, as I do" (and here she extended to him her hand)—"as I now do at your entreaty. But bear in mind, that should there fall in your way any one guilty of conspiring against the government, you will be so much the more bound

to visit the offence with rigorous punishment, as it is known you belong to a suspected family."

"Alas! madame," returned Villefort, "my profession, as well as the times in which we live, compel me to be severe. I have already successfully conducted several public prosecutions, and brought the offenders to merited punishment. But we have not done with the thing yet."

"Do you, indeed, think so?" inquired the marquise.

"I am, at least, fearful of it. Napoleon, in the island of Elba, is too near France, and his proximity keeps up the hopes of his partisans. Marseilles is filled with half-pay officers, who are daily, under one frivolous pretext or other, getting up quarrels with the royalists; from hence arise continual and fatal duels among the higher classes of persons, and assassinations in the lower."

"You have heard, perhaps," said the Count de Salvieux, one of M. de Saint-Méran's oldest friends, and chamberlain to the Count d'Artois, "that the Holy Alliance purpose removing him from thence?"

"Ah! they were talking about it when we left Paris," said M. de Saint-Méran; "and where is it decided to transfer him?"—"To Saint Helena!"

"For Heaven's sake, where is that?" asked the marquise.—"An island situated on the other side of the equator, at least two thousand leagues from hence," replied the count.

"So much the better! As Villefort observes, it is a great act of folly to have left such a man between Corsica, where he was born, Naples, of which his brother-in-law is king, and Italy, the sovereignty of which he coveted for his son."

"Well," said the marquise, "it seems probable that, by the aid of the Holy Alliance, we shall be rid of Napoleon; and we must trust to the vigilance of M. de Villefort to purify Marseilles of his partisans. The king is either a king or no king; if he be acknowledged as sovereign of France,

"For shame, M. de Villefort!" said Renée, becoming quite pale; "don't you see how you are frightening us?—and yet you laugh."

"Why, I stand almost in the light of one engaged in a duel. I have already recorded sentence of death, five or six times, against the movers of political conspiracies, and who can say how many daggers may be ready sharpened, and only waiting a favourable opportunity to be buried in my heart?"

"Gracious heavens! M. de Villefort," said Renée, becoming more and more terrified; "you surely are not in earnest."

"Indeed I am," replied the young magistrate with a smile; "and in the interesting trial that young lady is anxious to witness, the case would only be still more aggravated. Suppose, for instance, the prisoner, as is more than probable, to have served under Napoleon—well, can you expect for an instant, that one accustomed, at the word of his commander, to rush fearlessly on the very bayonets of his foe, will scruple more to drive a stiletto into the heart of one he knows to be his personal enemy, than to slaughter his fellow-creatures, merely because bidden to do so by one he is bound to obey? Besides, one requires the excitement of being hateful in the eyes of the accused, in order to lash one's self into a state of sufficient vehemence and power. I would not choose to see the man against whom I pleaded smile, as though in mockery of my words. No! my pride is to see the accused pale, agitated, and as though beaten out of all composure by the fire of my eloquence."

"Bravo!" cried one of the guests; "that is what I call talking to some purpose."

"Just the person we require at a time like the present," said a second.

"What a splendid business that last cause of yours was, my dear Villefort!" remarked a third; "I mean the trial of the man for murdering his father. Upon my word, you killed him ere the executioner had laid his hand upon him."

"Oh! as for parricides, and such dreadful people as that," interposed Renée, "it matters very little what is done to them; but as regards poor unfortunate creatures whose only crime consists in having mixed themselves up in political intrigues——"

"Why, that is the very worst offence they could possibly commit; for, don't you see, Renée, the king is the father of his people, and he who shall plot or contrive aught against the life and safety of the parent of thirty-two millions of souls, is a parricide upon a fearfully great scale?"

"I don't know anything about that," replied Renée; "but, M. de Villefort, you have promised me—have you not?—always to show mercy to those I plead for."

"Make yourself quite easy on that point," answered Villefort, with one of his sweetest smiles; "you and I will always consult upon our verdicts."

"My love," said the marquise, "attend to your doves, your lap-dogs, and embroidery, but do not meddle with what you understand not. Now-a-days the military profession has rest, and its brave sons repose under their well-earned laurels. Now is the time for those of the long robe, like M. de Villefort, to achieve a splendid notoriety; seek not, therefore, to cross the brilliant career your betrothed husband may otherwise pursue."

"Well," said Renée, "I cannot help regretting you had not chosen some other profession than your own—a physician, for instance. Do you know I always felt a shudder at the idea of even a *destroying angel*?"

"Dear, good Renée!" whispered Villefort, as he gazed with unutterable tenderness on the lovely speaker.

"Let us hope, my child," cried the marquis, "that M. de Villefort may prove the moral and political physician of this province; if so, he will have achieved a noble work."

"And one which will go far to efface the recollection of his father's conduct," added the incorrigible marquis.

"Madame," replied Villefort, with a mournful smile, "I have already had the honour to observe that my father has—at least I hope so—abjured his past errors, and that he is, at the present moment, a firm and zealous friend to religion and order—a better royalist, possibly, than his son; for he has to atone for past dereliction, while I have no other impulse than warm, decided preference and conviction." Having made this well-turned speech, Villefort looked carefully round to mark the effect of his oratory, much as he would have done had he been addressing the bench in open court.

"Do you know, my dear Villefort," cried the Count de Salvieux, "that is as nearly as possible what I myself said the other day at the Tuileries, when questioned by his majesty's principal chamberlain touching the singularity of an alliance between the son of a Girondin and the daughter of an officer of the Duke de Condé; and I assure you he seemed fully to comprehend that this mode of reconciling political differences was based upon sound and excellent principles. Then the king, who, without our suspecting it, had overheard our conversation, interrupted us by saying, 'Villefort'—observe that the king did not pronounce the word Noirtier, but, on the contrary, placed considerable emphasis on that of Villefort—'Villefort,' said his majesty, 'is a young man of great judgment and discretion, who will be sure to make a figure in his profession; I like him much, and it gave me great pleasure to hear that he was about to become the son-in-law of M. le Marquis and Madame la Marquise de Saint-Méran. I should myself have recommended the match, had not the noble marquis

and quitted the room upon the plea of urgent business : he soon, however, returned, his whole face beaming with delight. Renée regarded him with fond affection ; and certainly his handsome features, lit up as they then were with more than usual fire and animation, seemed formed to excite the innocent admiration with which she gazed on her graceful and intelligent lover.

"You were wishing just now," said Villefort, addressing her, "that I were a doctor instead of a lawyer. Well, I at least resemble the disciples of Esculapius in one thing—that of not being able to call a day my own, not even that of my betrothal."

"And wherefore were you called away just now?" asked Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, with an air of deep interest.

"For a very serious affair, which bids well to afford our executioner here some work."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Renée ; her cheeks, that were before glowing with emotion, becoming pale as marble.

"Is it possible?" burst simultaneously from all who were near enough to the magistrate to hear his words.

"Why, if my information prove correct, a sort of Bonaparte conspiracy has just been discovered."

"Can I believe my ears?" cried the marquise.

"I will read you the letter containing the accusation, at least," said Villefort :

"The procureur du roi is informed by a friend to the throne and the religious institutions of his country, that an individual, named Edmond Dantès, second in command on board the *Pharaon*, this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and again taken charge of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantès, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father's abode. Should it not be found in the possession of father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantès on board the *Pharaon*."

"But," said Renée, "this letter, which, after all, is but an anonymous scrawl, is not even addressed to you, but to the procureur du roi."

"True ; but that gentleman being absent, his secretary, by his orders, opened his letters : thinking this one of importance, he sent for me, but not finding me, took upon himself to give the necessary orders for arresting the accused party."

"Then the guilty person is absolutely in custody?" said the marquise.

"Nay, dear mother, say the accused person. You know we cannot yet pronounce him guilty."

"He is in safe custody," answered Villefort ; "and rely upon it, if the letter alluded to is found, he will not be likely to be trusted abroad again, unless he goes forth under the especial protection of the headsman."

"And where is the unfortunate being?" asked Renée.—"He is at my house?"

"Come, come, my friend," interrupted the marquise, "do not neglect your duty to linger with us. You are the king's servant, and must go whithersoever that service calls you."

"Oh, Villefort!" cried Renée, clasping her hands, and looking towards her lover with piteous earnestness, "be merciful on this the day of our betrothal."

The young man passed round to the side of the table where the fair pleader sat, and leaning over her chair said tenderly :

"To give you pleasure, my sweet Renée, I promise to show all the lenity in my power ; but if the charges brought against this Bonapartean hero prove correct, why, then, you really must give me leave to order his head to be cut off."

Renée, with an almost convulsive shudder, turned away her head, as though the very mention of killing a fellow-creature in cold blood was more than her tender nature could endure.

"Never mind that foolish girl, Villefort," said the marquise, "she will soon get over these things." So saying, Madame de Saint-Méran, extended her dry bony hand to Villefort, who, while imprinting a son-in-law's respectful salute on it, looked at Renée, as much as to say, "I must try and fancy 'tis your dear hand I kiss, as it should have been."

"These are mournful auspices to accompany a betrothal !" sighed poor Renée.

"Upon my word, child !" exclaimed the angry marquise, "your folly exceeds all bounds. I should be glad to know what connection there can possibly be between your sickly sentimentality and the affairs of the state !"

"Oh, mother !" murmured Renée.

"Nay, madame, I pray you pardon this little traitor ; I promise you that to make up for her want of loyalty, I will be most inflexibly severe ;" then casting an expressive glance at his betrothed, which seemed to say, "Fear not, for your dear sake my justice shall be tempered with mercy," and receiving a sweet and approving smile in return, Villefort quitted the room.

"Oh, no, monsieur, he is very young."

"How old?"—"Nineteen or twenty at the most." At this moment, and as Villefort had arrived at the corner of the Rue des Conseillers, a man, who seemed to have been waiting for him, approached: it was M. Morrel.

"Ah! M. de Villefort," cried he, "I am delighted to see you. Some of your people have committed the strangest mistake—they have just arrested Edmond Dantès, the mate of my ship."

"I know it, monsieur," replied Villefort, "and I am now going to examine him."

"Oh," said Morrel, carried away by his friendship, "you do not know him, and I do. He is the most estimable, the most trustworthy creature in the world, and I will venture to say, there is not a better seaman in all the merchant service. Oh, M. de Villefort, I beseech your indulgence for him."

Villefort, as we have seen, belonged to the aristocratic party at Marseilles. Morrel to the plebeian; the first was a royalist, the other suspected of Bonapartism. Villefort looked disdainfully at Morrel, and replied:

"You are aware, monsieur, that a man may be estimable and trustworthy in private life, and the best seaman in the merchant service, and yet be, politically speaking, a great criminal. Is it not true?"

The magistrate laid emphasis on these words, as if he wished to apply them to the owner himself, whilst his eyes seemed to plunge into the heart of him who, whilst he interceded for another, had himself need of indulgence. Morrel reddened, for his own conscience was not quite clear on politics; besides, what Dantès had told him of his interview with the grand-marshal, and what the emperor had said to him, embarrassed him. He replied, however:—

"I entreat you, M. de Villefort, be, as you always are, kind and equitable, and give him back to us soon." This *give us* sounded revolutionary in the sub-prefect's ears.

"Ah, ah!" murmured he, "is Dantès then a member of some Carbonari society, that his protector thus employs the collective form? He was, if I recollect, arrested in a cabaret, in company with a great many others." Then he added, "Monsieur, you may rest assured I shall perform my duty impartially, and that if he be innocent you shall not have appealed to me in vain; should he, however, be guilty, in this present epoch, impunity would furnish a dangerous example, and I must do my duty."

As he had now arrived at the door of his own house, which adjoined the Palais de Justice, he entered, after having saluted the shipowner, who stood, as if petrified, on the spot where Villefort had left him. The antechamber was full of agents of police and gendarmes, in the midst of whom, carefully watched, but calm and smiling, stood the prisoner. Villefort traversed the antechamber, cast a side glance at Dantès, and taking a packet which a gendarme offered him, disappeared, saying: "Bring in the prisoner."

Rapid as had been Villefort's glance, it had served to give him an idea of the man he was about to interrogate. He had recognised intelligence in the high forehead, courage in the dark eye and bent brow, and frankness in the thick lips that showed a set of pearly teeth. Villefort's first impression was favourable; but he had been so often warned to mistrust first impulses, that he applied the maxim to the impression, forgetting the difference between the two words. He stifled, therefore, the feelings of compassion that were rising, composed his features, and sat down at his bureau. An instant after Dantès entered. He was pale, but calm and

collected, and saluting his judge with easy politeness, looked round for a seat, as if he had been in the saloon of M. Morrel. It was then that he encountered for the first time, Villefort's look,—that look peculiar to justice, which, whilst it seems to read the culprit's thoughts betrays nought of its own.

"Who and what are you?" demanded Villefort, turning over a pile of papers, containing information relative to the prisoner, that an agent of police had given to him on his entry.

"My name is Edmond Dantès," replied the young man calmly; "I am mate of the *Pharaon*, belonging to Messrs. Morrel and Son."

"Your age?" continued Villefort.—"Nineteen," returned Dantès.

"What were you doing at the moment you were arrested?"

"I was at the festival of my marriage, monsieur," said the young man, his voice slightly tremulous, so great was the contrast between that happy moment and the painful ceremony he was now undergoing; so great was the contrast between the sombre aspect of M. de Villefort and the radiant face of Mercédès.

"You were at the festival of your marriage?" said the deputy, shuddering in spite of himself.

"Yes, monsieur, I am on the point of marrying a young girl I have been attached to for three years." Villefort, impassive as he was, was struck with this coincidence; and the tremulous voice of Dantès, surprised in the midst of his happiness, struck a sympathetic chord in his own bosom;—he also was on the point of being married, and he was summoned from his own happiness to destroy that of another. "This philosophic reflection," thought he, "will make a great sensation at M. de Saint-Méran's;" and he arranged mentally, whilst Dantès awaited further questions, the antithesis by which orators often create a reputation for eloquence. When this speech was arranged, Villefort turned to Dantès.

"*Pardieu !*" said Villefort, "he is a noble fellow ! I hope I shall gain Renée's favour easily by obeying the first command she ever imposed on me. I shall have at least a pressure of the hand in public, and a sweet kiss in private." Full of this idea, Villefort's face became so joyous, that when he turned to Dantès, the latter, who had watched the change on his physiognomy, was smiling also.

"Sir," said Villefort, "have you any enemies, at least that you know ?"

"I have enemies?" replied Dantès ; "my position is not sufficiently elevated for that. As for my character, that is, perhaps, somewhat too hasty ; but I have striven to repress it. I have had ten or twelve sailors under me ; and if you question them, they will tell you that they love and respect me, not as a father, for I am too young, but as an elder brother."

"But instead of enemies you may have excited jealousy. You are about to become captain at nineteen—an elevated post ; you are about to marry a pretty girl, who loves you ; and these two pieces of good fortune may have excited the envy of some one."

"You are right ; you know men better than I do, and what you say may possibly be the case, I confess ; I prefer not knowing them, because then I should be forced to hate them."

"You are wrong ; you should always strive to see clearly around you. You seem a worthy young man ; I will depart from the strict line of my duty to aid you in discovering the author of this accusation. Here is the paper ; do you know the writing?" As he spoke, Villefort drew the letter from his pocket, and presented it to Dantès. Dantès read it. A cloud passed over his brow as he said :

"No, monsieur, I do not know the writing, and yet it is tolerably plain. Whoever did it writes well. I am very fortunate," added he, looking gratefully at Villefort, "to be examined by such a man as you ; for this envious person is a real enemy." And by the rapid glance that the young man's eyes shot forth, Villefort saw how much energy lay hid beneath this mildness.

"Now," said the deputy, "answer me frankly, not as a prisoner to a judge, but as one man to another who takes an interest in him, what truth is there in the accusation contained in this anonymous letter?" And Villefort threw disdainfully on his bureau the letter Dantès had just given back to him.

"None at all. I will tell you the real facts. I swear by my honour as a sailor, by my love for Mercédès, by the life of my father——"

"Speak, monsieur," said Villefort. Then, internally, "If Renée could see me, I hope she would be satisfied, and would no longer call me a decapitator."

"Well, when we quitted Naples, Captain Leclere was attacked with a brain-fever. As we had no doctor on board, and he was so anxious to arrive at Elba, that he would not touch at any other port, his disorder rose to such a height, that at the end of the third day, feeling he was dying, he called me to him. 'My dear Dantès,' said he, 'swear to perform what I am going to tell you, for it is a matter of the deepest importance.'

"I swear, captain," replied I.

"Well, as after my death the command devolves on you as mate, assume the command, and bear up for the isle of Elba, disembark at Porto-Ferrajo, ask for the grand-marshal, give him this letter ;—perhaps they will give you another letter, and charge you with a commission. You will accomplish what I was to have done, and derive all the honour and profit from it."

" ' I will do it, captain ; but perhaps, I shall not be admitted to the grand-marshal's presence as easily as you expect ' "

" ' Here is a ring that will obtain audience of him, and remove every difficulty,' said the captain. At these words he gave me a ring. It was time ;—two hours after he was delirious ; the next day he died."

" And what did you do then ? "

" What I ought to have done, and what every one would have done in my place. Everywhere the last requests of a dying man are sacred ; but with a sailor the last requests of his superior are commands. I sailed for the isle of Elba, where I arrived the next day ; I ordered everybody to remain on board, and went on shore alone. As I had expected, I found some difficulty in obtaining access to the grand-marshal ; but I sent the ring I had received from the captain to him, and was instantly admitted. He questioned me concerning Captain Leclere's death ; and, as the latter had told me, gave me a letter to carry on to a person in Paris. I undertook it because it was what my captain had bade me do. I landed here, regulated the affairs of the vessel, and hastened to visit my affianced bride, whom I found more lovely than ever. Thanks to M. Morrel, all the forms were got over ; in a word, I was, as I told you, at my marriage-feast ; and I should have been married in an hour, and to-morrow I intended to start for Paris."

" Ah ! " said Villefort, " this seems to me the truth. If you have been culpable, it was imprudence, and this imprudence was legitimised by the orders of your captain. Give up this letter you have brought from Elba, and pass your word you will appear should you be required, and go and rejoin your friends."

" I am free, then, sir ? " cried Dantès, joyfully.—" Yes ; but first give me this letter."

bension. After reading the letter, Villefort covered his face with his hands.

"Oh!" said Dantès, timidly, "what is the matter?" Villefort made no answer, but raised his head at the expiration of a few seconds, and again perused the letter.

"You give me your honour that you are ignorant of the contents of this letter?"

"I give you my honour, sir," said Dantès; "but what is the matter? You are ill;—shall I ring for assistance?—shall I call?"

"No," said Villefort, rising hastily; "stay where you are. It is for me to give orders here, and not you."

"Monsieur," replied Dantès, proudly, "it was only to summon assistance for you."

"I want none; it was a temporary indisposition. Attend to yourself; answer me." Dantès waited, expecting a question, but in vain. Villefort fell back on his chair, passed his hand over his brow, moist with perspiration, and, for the third time, read the letter.

"Oh! if he knows the contents of this!" murmured he, "and that Noirtier is the father of Villefort, I am lost!" And he fixed his eyes upon Edmond as if he would have penetrated his thoughts.

"Oh! it is impossible to doubt it," cried he, suddenly.

"In heaven's name!" cried the unhappy young man, "if you doubt me, question me; I will answer you." Villefort made a violent effort, and in a tone he strove to render firm:

"Sir," said he, "I am no longer able, as I had hoped, to restore you immediately to liberty; before doing so, I must consult the judge of instruction: but you see how I behave towards you."

"Oh! monsieur," cried Dantès, "you have been rather a friend than a judge."

"Well, I must detain you some time longer, but I will strive to make it as short as possible. The principal charge against you is this letter, and you see——" Villefort approached the fire, cast it in, and waited until it was entirely consumed.

"You see, I destroy it?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Dantès, "you are goodness itself."

"Listen," continued Villefort; "you can now have confidence in me after what I have done."—"Oh! order me, and I will obey."

"Listen! this is not an order, but a counsel I give you."

"Speak, and I will follow your advice."

"I shall detain you until this evening in the Palais de Justice. Should any one else interrogate you, do not breathe a word of this letter."—"I promise." It was Villefort who seemed to entreat, and the prisoner who reassured him.

"You see," continued he, "the letter is destroyed; you and I alone know of its existence; should you, therefore, be questioned, deny all knowledge of it."

"Fear nothing; I will deny it."

"It was the only letter you had?"—"It was."

"Swear it."—"I swear it." Villefort rang. An agent of police entered. Villefort whispered some words in his ear, to which the officer replied by a motion of his head.

"Follow him," said Villefort to Dantès. Dantès saluted Villefort and retired. Hardly had the door closed, than Villefort threw himself into a chair.

"Alas ! alas !" murmured he, "if the procureur de roi had been at Marseilles I should have been ruined. This accursed letter would have destroyed all my hopes. Oh ! my father, must your past career always interfere with my successes ?" Suddenly a light passed over his face, a smile played round his mouth, and his lips became unclenched.

"This will do," said he, "and from this letter, which might have ruined me, I will make my fortune." And after having assured himself the prisoner was gone, the deputy procureur hastened to the house of his bride.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHATEAU D'IF.

THE commissary of police, as he traversed the antechamber, made a sign to two gendarmes, who placed themselves one on Dantès' right and the other on his left. A door that communicated with the Palais de Justice was opened, and they traversed a long range of gloomy corridors, whose appearance might have made even the boldest shudder. The Palais de Justice communicated with the prison,—a sombre edifice, that from its grated windows looks on the clock-tower of the Accoules. After numberless windings, Dantès saw an iron door. The commissary knocked thrice, every blow seeming to Dantès as if struck on his heart. The door opened, the two gendarmes gently pushed him forward, and the door closed with a loud sound behind him. The air he inhaled was no longer pure, but thick and mephitic,—he was in prison. He was conducted to a tolerably neat chamber, but grated and barred, and its appearance, therefore, did not greatly alarm him ; besides, the words of Villefort, who seemed to interest himself so much, resounded still in his ears like a promise of freedom. It was four o'clock when Dantès was placed in this

Rue Caisserie, and by the Quay Saint-Laurent and the Rue Taramis, to the port.

The carriage stopped, the exempt descended, approached the guard-house, a dozen soldiers came out and formed themselves in order ; Dantès saw the reflection of their muskets by the light of the lamps on the quay.

"Can all this force be summoned on my account?" thought he.

The exempt opened the door, which was locked, and, without speaking a word, answered Dantès' question ; for he saw between the ranks of the soldiers a passage formed from the carriage to the port. The two gendarmes who were opposite to him descended first, then he was ordered to alight, and the gendarmes on each side of him followed his example. They advanced towards a boat, which a custom-house officer held by a chain, near the quay.

The soldiers looked at Dantès with an air of stupid curiosity. In an instant he was placed in the stern-sheets of the boat, between the gendarmes, whilst the exempt stationed himself at the bow ; a shove sent the boat adrift, and four sturdy oarsmen impelled it rapidly towards the Pilon. At a shout from the boat, the chain that closes the mouth of the port was lowered, and in a second they were outside the harbour.

The prisoner's first feeling was joy at again breathing the pure air—for air is freedom ; but he soon sighed, for he passed before La Réserve, where he had that morning been so happy, and now through the open windows came the laughter and revelry of a ball. Dantès folded his hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed fervently.

The boat continued her voyage. They had passed the Tête de More, were now in front of the lighthouse, and about to double the battery. This manœuvre was incomprehensible to Dantès.

"Whither are you taking me?" asked he.—"You will soon know."

"But still"——"We are forbidden to give you any explanation." Dantès knew that nothing would be more absurd than to question subordinates, who were forbidden to reply, and remained silent.

The most vague and wild thoughts passed through his mind. The boat they were in could not make a long voyage ; there was no vessel at anchor outside the harbour ; he thought, perhaps, they were going to leave him on some distant point. He was not bound, nor had they made any attempt to handcuff him ; this seemed a good augury. Besides, had not the deputy, who had been so kind to him, told him that provided he did not pronounce the dreaded name of Noirtier, he had nothing to apprehend ? Had not Villefort in his presence destroyed the fatal letter, the only proof against him ? He waited silently, striving to pierce through the darkness.

They had left the Ile Ratonneau, where the lighthouse stood, on the right, and were now opposite the Point des Catalans. It seemed to the prisoner that he could distinguish a female form on the beach, for it was there Mercédès dwelt. How was it that a presentiment did not warn Mercédès her lover was near her ?

One light alone was visible ; and Dantès recognised it as coming from the chamber of Mercédès. A loud cry could be heard by her. He did not utter it. What would his guards think if they heard him shout like a madman ?

He remained silent, his eyes fixed upon the light ; the boat went on, but the prisoner only thought of Mercédès. A rising ground hid the light. Dantès turned and perceived they had got out to sea. Whilst he had been absorbed in thought, they had hoisted the sail.

In spite of his repugnance to address the guards, Dantès turned to the nearest gendarme, and taking his hand :

"Comrade," said he, "I adjure you, as a Christian and a soldier, to tell me where we are going. I am Captain Dantès, a loyal Frenchman, though accused of treason ; tell me where you are conducting me, and I promise you on my honour I will submit to my fate."

The gendarme looked irresolutely at his companion, who returned for answer a sigh that said, "I see no great harm in telling him now," and the gendarme replied :

"You are a native of Marseilles, and a sailor, and yet you do not know where you are going?"—"On my honour, I have no idea."

"That is impossible."—"I swear to you it is true. Tell me, I entreat."

"But my orders."—"Your orders do not forbid your telling me what I must know in ten minutes, in half an hour, or an hour. You see I cannot escape, even if I intended."

"Unless you are blind, or have never been outside the harbour, you must know."—"I do not."

"Look round you then." Dantès rose and looked forward, when he saw rise within a hundred yards of him the black and frowning rock on which stands the Château d'If. This gloomy fortress, which has for more than three hundred years furnished food for so many wild legends, seemed to Dantès like a scaffold to a malefactor.

"The Château d'If?" cried he, "what are we going there for?" The gendarme smiled.

"I am not going there to be imprisoned," said Dantès ; "it is only used for political prisoners. I have committed no crime. Are there any magistrates or judges at the Château d'If?"

"There are only," said the gendarme, "a governor, a garrison, turnkeys, and good thick walls. Come, come, do not look so astonished, or you will

sailors leaped on shore, a cord creaked as it ran through a pulley, and Dantès guessed they were at the end of the voyage.

His guardians, taking hold of his arms, forced him to rise, and dragged him towards the steps that lead to the gate of the fortress, whilst the exempt followed, armed with a carbine and bayonet.

Dantès made no resistance ; he was like a man in a dream : he saw soldiers who stationed themselves on the sides ; he felt himself forced up fresh stairs ; he perceived he passed through a door, and the door closed behind him ; but all this as mechanically as through a mist, nothing distinctly.

They halted for a minute, during which he strove to collect his thoughts. He looked around : he was in a court surrounded by high walls ; he heard the measured tread of sentinels, and as they passed before the light he saw the barrels of their muskets shine.

They waited upwards of ten minutes. Certain Dantès could not escape, the gendarmes released him. They seemed awaiting orders. The orders arrived.

"Where is the prisoner?" said a voice.—"Here," replied the gendarmes.

"Let him follow me ; I am going to conduct him to his room."

"Go !" said the gendarmes, pushing Dantès.

The prisoner followed his conductor, who led him into a room almost under ground, whose bare and reeking walls seemed as though impregnated with tears ; a lamp placed on a stool illumined the apartment faintly, and showed Dantès the features of his conductor, an under-gaoler, ill-clothed, and of sullen appearance.

"Here is your chamber for to-night," said he. "It is late, and Monsieur le Gouverneur is asleep. To-morrow, perhaps, he may change you. In the mean time there is bread, water, and fresh straw ; and that is all a prisoner can wish for. Good night." And before Dantès could open his mouth—before he had noticed where the gaoler placed his bread or the water—before he had glanced towards the corner where the straw was, the gaoler disappeared, taking with him the lamp.

Dantès was alone in darkness and in silence—cold as the shadows that he felt breathe on his burning forehead. With the first dawn of day the gaoler returned, with orders to leave Dantès where he was. He found the prisoner in the same position, as if fixed there, his eyes swollen with weeping. He had passed the night standing, and without sleep. The gaoler advanced ; Dantès appeared not to perceive him. He touched him on the shoulder, Edmond started.

"Have you not slept?" said the gaoler.—"I do not know," replied Dantès. The gaoler stared.

"Are you hungry?" continued he.—"I do not know."

"Do you wish for anything?"—"I wish to see the governor." The gaoler shrugged his shoulders and left the chamber.

Dantès followed him with his eyes, and stretched forth his hands towards the open door ; but the door closed. All his emotion then burst forth : he cast himself on the ground, weeping bitterly, and asking himself what crime he had committed that he was thus punished.

The day passed thus ; he scarcely tasted food, but walked round and round the cell like a wild beast in its cage. One thought in particular tormented him, namely, that during his journey hither he had sat so still, whereas he might, a dozen times, have plunged into the sea, and, thanks to his powers of swimming, for which he was famous, have gained the shore, concealed himself until the arrival of a Genoese or Spanish vessel, escaped to Spain or Italy, where Mercédès and his father could have

joined him. He had no fears as to how he should live—good seamen are welcome everywhere. He spoke Italian like a Tuscan, and Spanish like a Castilian ; he would then have been happy, whereas he was now confined in the Château d'If, ignorant of the future destiny of his father and Mercédès ; and all this because he had trusted to Villefort's promise. The thought was maddening, and Dantès threw himself furiously down on his straw. The next morning the gaoler made his appearance.

"Well," said the gaoler, "are you more reasonable to-day?" Dantès made no reply.

"Come, take courage ; do you want anything in my power to do for you?"

"I wish to see the governor."

"I have already told you it was impossible."

"Why so?"—"Because it is not allowed by the rules."

"What is allowed, then?"—"Better fare, if you pay for it, books, and leave to walk about."

"I do not want books, I am satisfied with my food, and I do not care to walk about ; but I wish to see the governor."

"If you worry me by repeating the same thing, I will not bring you any more to eat."

"Well, then," said Edmond, "if you do not, I shall die of famine—that is all."

The gaoler saw by his tone he would be happy to die ; and as every prisoner is worth sixpence a day to his gaoler, he replied in a more subdued tone :

"What you ask is impossible ; but if you are very well behaved you will be allowed to walk about, and some day you will meet the governor ; and if he chooses to reply, that is his affair."

"But," asked Dantès, "how long shall I have to wait?"

three days you will want a strait-waistcoat ; but, fortunately, there are dungeons here." Dantès whirled the stool round his head.

"Oh !" said the gaoler, "you shall see the governor at once."

"That is right," returned Dantès, dropping the stool and sitting on it as if he were in reality mad. The gaoler went out, and returned in an instant with a corporal and four soldiers.

"By the governor's orders," said he, "conduct the prisoner to the story beneath."

"To the dungeon, then," said the corporal.

"Yes ; we must put the madman with the madmen." The soldiers seized Dantès, who followed passively.

He descended fifteen steps, and the door of a dungeon was opened, and he was thrust in. The door closed, and Dantès advanced with outstretched hands until he touched the wall ; he then sat down in the corner until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. The gaoler was right ; Dantès wanted but little of being utterly mad.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVENING OF THE BETROTHAL.

VILLEFORT had, as we have said, hastened back to the Place du Grand Cours, and on entering the house found all the guests in the salon at coffee. Renée was, with all the rest of the company, anxiously awaiting him, and his entrance was followed by a general exclamation.

"Well, Decapitator, Guardian of the State, Brutus, what is the matter?" said one.

"Are we threatened with a fresh Reign of Terror?" asked another.

"Has the Corsican ogre broke loose?" cried a third.

"Madame la Marquise," said Villefort, approaching his future mother-in-law, "I request your pardon for thus leaving you. M. le Marquis, honour me by a few moments' private conversation !"

"Ah ! this affair is really serious, then?" asked the marquis, remarking the cloud on Villefort's brow.

"So serious, that I must take leave of you for a few days ; so," added he, turning to Renée, "judge for yourself if it be not important."

"You are going to leave us?" cried Renée, unable to hide her emotion.

"Alas !" returned Villefort, "I must !"

"Where, then, are you going?" asked the marquise.

"That, madame, is the secret of justice ; but if you have any commissions for Paris, a friend of mine is going there to-night." The guests looked at each other.

"You wish to speak to me alone?" said the marquis.

"Yes, let us go into your cabinet." The marquis took his arm, and left the salon.

"Well !" asked he, as soon as they were in his closet, "tell me, what is it?"

"An affair of the greatest importance, that demands my immediate presence in Paris. Now, excuse the indiscretion, marquis, but have you any funded property?"

"All my fortune is in the funds ; seven or eight hundred thousand francs."

"Then sell out—sell out, marquis, as soon as you can."

"Eh ! how can I sell out here?"

"You have a broker ; have you not?"—"Yes,"

"Then give me a letter to him, and tell him to sell out without an instant's delay, perhaps even now I shall arrive too late."

"What say you?" said the marquis, "let us lose no time, then!"

And, sitting down, he wrote a letter to his broker, ordering him to sell out at any loss.

"Now, then," said Villefort, placing the letter in his pocket-book, "write another!"

"To whom?"—"To the king."

"I dare not write to his majesty."

"I do not ask you to write to his majesty, but ask M. de Salvieux to do so. I want a letter that will enable me to reach the king's presence without all the formalities of demanding an audience; that would occasion a loss of time."

"But address yourself to the keeper of the seals, he has the right of entry, and can procure you audience."

"Doubtless; but there is no occasion to divide the merit of my discovery with him. The keeper would leave me in the background, and take all the honour to himself. I tell you, marquis, my fortune is made if I only reach the Tuileries the first, for the king will not forget the service I do him."

"In that case make your preparations, and I will write the letter."

"Be as quick as possible, I must be *en route* in a quarter of an hour."

"Make your carriage stop at the door."

"You will present my excuses to the marquise and Mademoiselle Renée whom I leave on such a day with great regret."

"They are both in my room, you can say all this for yourself."

"A thousand thanks—busy yourself with the letter."

The marquis rang, a servant entered.

"Inform the Count de Salvieux I am waiting for him."

consuming agony whose pangs cease only with life. Then he had a moment's hesitation. He had frequently called for capital punishment on criminals, and owing to his irresistible eloquence they had been condemned, and yet the slightest shadow of remorse had never clouded Villefort's brow, because they were guilty ; at least, he believed so ; but here was an innocent man whose happiness he had destroyed : in this case he was not the judge, but the executioner.

As he thus reflected, he felt the sensation we have described, and which had hitherto been unknown to him, arise in his bosom, and fill him with vague apprehensions. It is thus that a wounded man trembles instinctively at the approach of the finger to his wound until it be healed, but Villefort's was one of those that never close, or if they do, only close to reopen more agonizing than ever. If at this moment the sweet voice of Renée had sounded in his ears pleading for mercy, or the fair Mercédès had entered and said, "In the name of God, I conjure you to restore me my affianced husband," his cold and trembling hands would have signed his release ; but no voice broke the stillness of the chamber, and the door was opened only by Villefort's valet, who came to tell him the travelling-carriage was in readiness.

Villefort rose, or rather sprang, from his chair, hastily opened one of the drawers of his *secrétaire*, emptied all the gold it contained into his pocket, stood motionless an instant, his hand pressed to his head, muttered a few inarticulate sounds, and then perceiving his servant had placed his cloak on his shoulders, he sprang into the carriage, ordering the postilions to go, Rue du Grand Cours, to the house of M. de Saint-Méran.

As the marquis had promised, Villefort found the letter. He started when he saw Renée, for he fancied she was again about to plead for Dantès. Alas ! she was thinking only of Villefort's departure.

She loved Villefort, and he left her at the moment he was about to become her husband. Villefort knew not when he should return, and Renée, far from pleading for Dantès, hated the man whose crime separated her from her lover. What had Mercédès to say ?

Mercédès had met Fernand at the corner of the Rue de la Loge ; she had returned to the Catalans, and had despairingly cast herself on her couch. Fernand, kneeling by her side, took her hand, and covered it with kisses that Mercédès did not even feel. She passed the night thus, and the day returned without her noticing it. Grief had made her blind to all but one object—that was Edmond.

"Ah ! you are there," said she, at length.

"I have not quitted you since yesterday," returned Fernand, sorrowfully.

M. Morrel had learned that Dantès had been conducted to prison, and he had gone to all his friends, and the influential persons of the city ; but the report was already in circulation that Dantès was arrested as a Bonapartist agent ; and as the most sanguine looked upon any attempt of Napoleon to remount the throne as impossible, he met with nothing but refusal, and had returned home in despair.

Caderousse was equally restless and uneasy, but instead of seeking to aid Dantès, he had shut himself up with two bottles of wine, in the hope of drowning reflection. But he did not succeed, and became too intoxicated to fetch any more wine, and yet not so intoxicated as to forget what had happened.

Danglars alone was content and joyous—he had got rid of an enemy and preserved his situation on board the *Pharaon*. Danglars was one of those men born with a pen behind the ear, and an inkstand in place of a heart.

Everything with him was multiplication or subtraction, and he estimated the life of a man as less precious than a figure, when that figure could increase, and that life would diminish, the total of the amount.

Villefort, after having received M. de Salvieux' letter, embraced Renée, kissed the marquise's hand, and shaken hands with the marquis, started for Paris. Old Dantès was dying with anxiety to know what had become of Edmond

CHAPTER X.

THE SMALL CABINET OF THE TUILERIES.

WE will leave Villefort on the road to Paris, travelling with all speed, and penetrating the two or three apartments which precede it, enter the small cabinet of the Tuileries with the arched window, so well known as having been the favourite cabinet of Napoleon and Louis XVIII., as also that of Louis Philippe.

There, in this closet, seated before a walnut-tree table he had brought with him from Hartwell, and to which, from one of those fancies not uncommon to great people, he was particularly attached, the king, Louis XVIII., was carelessly listening to a man of fifty or fifty-two years of age, with grey hairs, aristocratic bearing, and exceedingly gentlemanly attire, whilst he was making a note in a volume of Horace, Gryphius's edition, which was much indebted to the sagacious observations of the philosophical monarch.

"You say, sir——" said the king.

"That I am exceedingly disquieted, sire."

"Really, have you had a visit of the seven fat kine and seven lean kine?"

"No, sire, for that would only betoken for me seven years of plenty and

small as possible, another note on the margin of his Horace, and then looking at the duke with the air of a man who thinks he has an idea of his own, whilst he is but commenting upon the idea of another, he said :

"Go on, my dear duke, go on—I listen."

"Sire," said Blacas, who had for a moment the hope of sacrificing Villefort to his own profit, "I am compelled to tell you that these are not mere rumours destitute of foundation which thus disquiet me ; but a reflective man, deserving all my confidence, and charged by me to watch over the south" (the duke hesitated as he pronounced these words), "has arrived post to tell me a great peril threatens the king, and then I hastened to you, sire."

"*Mala ducis avi domum*," continued Louis XVIII., still annotating.

"Does your majesty wish me to cease as to this subject?"

"By no means, dear duke ; but just stretch out your hand."

"Which?"—"Whichever you please—there to the left."

"Here, sire?"

"I tell you to the left, and you seek the right ; I mean on my right—yes, there. You will find the report of the minister of police of yesterday. But here is M. Dandr  himself," and M. Dandr , announced by the chamberlain-in-waiting, entered.

"Come in," said Louis XVIII., with an imperceptible smile, "come in, baron, and tell the duke all you know—the latest news of M. de Bonaparte ; do not conceal anything, however serious,—let us see, the island of Elba is a volcano, and we may expect to have issuing thence flaming and bristling war—*bella, horrida bella*." M. Dandr  leaned very respectfully on the back of a chair with his two hands, and said :

"Has your majesty perused yesterday's report?"

"Yes, yes ; but tell the count himself, who cannot find anything, what the report contains—give him the particulars of what the usurper is doing in his islet."

"Monsieur," said the baron to the count, "all the servants of his majesty must approve of the latest intelligence which we have from the island of Elba. Bonaparte—" M. Dandr  looked at Louis XVIII., who, employed in writing a note, did not even raise his head. "Bonaparte," continued the baron, "is mortally wearied, and passes whole days in watching his miners at work at Porto-Longone."

"And scratches himself for amusement," added the king.

"Scratches himself?" inquired the count, "what does your majesty mean?"

"Yes, indeed, my dear count. Did you forget that this great man, this hero, this demigod, is attacked with a malady of the skin which worries him to death, *prurigo*?"

"And, moreover, M. le Comte," continued the minister of police, "we are almost assured that, in a very short time, the usurper will be insane."

"Insane?"

"Insane to a degree ; his head becomes weaker. Sometimes he weeps bitterly, sometimes laughs boisterously ; at other times he passes hours on the sea-shore, flinging stones in the water, and when the flint makes 'duck-and-drake' five or six times, he appears as delighted as if he had gained another Marengo or Austerlitz. Now, you must agree these are indubitable symptoms of weakness?"

"Or of wisdom, M. le Baron—or of wisdom," said Louis XVIII., laughing ; "the greatest captains of antiquity recreated themselves with casting pebbles into the ocean—see Plutarch's life of Scipio Africanus."

M. de Blacas pondered deeply on this blind repose of monarch and minister. Villefort, who did not choose to reveal the whole secret, lest another should reap all the benefit of the disclosure, had yet communicated enough to cause him the greatest uneasiness.

"Well, well, Dandr ," said Louis XVIII., "Blacas is not yet convinced ; let us proceed, therefore, to the usurper's conversion." The minister of police bowed.

"The usurper's conversion !" murmured the count, looking at the king and Dandr , who spoke alternately, like Virgil's shepherds. "The usurper converted !"

"Decidedly, my dear count."

"In what way converted ?"—"To good principles. Explain all about it, baron."

"Why, this it is, M. le Comte," said the minister, with the gravest air in the world : "Napoleon lately had a review, and as two or three of his old veterans testified a desire to return to France, he gave them their dismissal, and exhorted them to 'serve the good king.' These were his own words, M. le Comte, I am certain of that."

"Well, Blacas, what think you of this ?" inquired the king triumphantly, and pausing for a moment from the voluminous scholiast before him.

"I say, sire, that M. the minister of police or I am greatly deceived ; and as it is impossible it can be the minister of police, as he has the guardianship of the safety and honour of your majesty, it is probable I am in error. However, sire, if I might advise, your majesty will interrogate the person of whom I spoke to you, and I will urge your majesty to do him this honour."

"Most willingly, count ; under your auspices I will receive any person you please, but with arms in hand. M. le Ministre, have you any report more recent than this, dated the 20th February, and this is the 4th of

"Which is undergoing great fatigue and anxiety, my dear count, when we have a telegraph which corresponds in three or four hours, and that without putting it the least in the world out of breath."

"Ah, sire, you recompense but badly this poor young man, who has come so far, and with so much ardour, to give your majesty useful information. If only for the sake of M. de Salvieux, who recommends him to me, I entreat your majesty to receive him graciously."

"M. de Salvieux, my brother's chamberlain?"—"Yes, sire."

"He is at Marseilles."—"And writes me thence."

"Does he speak to you of this conspiracy?"—"No, but strongly recommends M. de Villefort, and begs me to present him to your majesty."

"M. de Villefort!" cried the king, "is the messenger's name M. de Villefort?"—"Yes, sire."

"And he comes from Marseilles?"—"In person."

"Why did you not mention his name at once?" replied the king, betraying some uneasiness.

"Sire, I thought his name was unknown to your majesty."

"No, no, Blacas; he is a man of strong and elevated understanding, ambitious too, and, *pardieu!* you know his father's name!"

"His father?"—"Yes, Noirtier."

"Noirtier the Girondin?—Noirtier the senator?"—"He himself."

"And your majesty has employed the son of such a man?"

"Blacas, my friend, you have but limited comprehension. I told you Villefort was ambitious, and to attain this ambition Villefort would sacrifice everything, even his father."

"Then, sire, may I present him?"—"This instant, count! Where is he?"

"Waiting below, in my carriage."—"Seek him at once."

"I hasten to do so." The count left the royal presence with the speed of a young man: his really sincere royalism made him youthful again. Louis XVIII. remained alone, and turning his eyes on his half-opened Horace, muttered, "*Iustum et tenacem propositi virum.*"

M. de Blacas returned with the same rapidity he had descended, but in the antechamber he was forced to appeal to the king's authority. Villefort's dusty garb, his costume, which was not of courtly cut, excited the susceptibility of M. de Brezé, who was all astonishment at finding that this young man had the pretension to enter before the king in such attire. The count, however, superseded all difficulties with a word—his majesty's order; and, in spite of the observations which the master of the ceremonies made for the honour of his office and principles, Villefort was introduced.

The king was seated in the same place where the count had left him. On opening the door, Villefort found himself facing him, and the young magistrate's first impulse was to pause.

"Come in, M. de Villefort," said the king, "come in." Villefort bowed, and advancing a few steps, waited until the king should interrogate him.

"M. de Villefort," said Louis XVIII., "the Count de Blacas assures me you have some interesting information to communicate."

"Sire, the count is right, and I believe your majesty will think it equally important."

"In the first place, and before everything else, sir, is the bad news as great in your opinion as it is wished to make me believe?"

"Sire, I believe it to be most urgent, but I hope, by the speed I have used, that it is not irreparable."

"Speak as fully as you please, sir," said the king, who began to give

way to the emotion which had showed itself in Blacas's face and affected Villefort's voice. "Speak, sir, and pray begin at the beginning; I like order in everything."

"Sire," said Villefort, "I will render a faithful report to your majesty, but I must entreat your forgiveness if my anxiety creates some obscurity in my language." A glance at the king after this discreet and subtle exordium assured Villefort of the benignity of his august auditor, and he continued:

"Sire, I have come as rapidly to Paris as possible, to inform your majesty that I have discovered, in the exercise of my duties, not a commonplace and insignificant plot, such as is every day got up in the lower ranks of the people and in the army, but an actual conspiracy—a storm which menaces no less than the throne of your majesty. Sire, the usurper is arming three ships, he meditates some project, which, however mad, is yet, perhaps, terrible. At this moment he will have left Elba, to go whither I know not, but assuredly to attempt a landing either at Naples, or on the coast of Tuscany, or perhaps on the shore of France. Your majesty is well aware that the sovereign of the isle of Elba has maintained his relations with Italy and France?"

"I am, sir," said the king, much agitated; "and recently we have had information that the Bonapartist clubs have had meetings in the Rue Saint-Jacques. But proceed, I beg of you. How did you obtain these details?"

"Sire, they are the results of an examination which I have made of a man of Marseilles, whom I have watched for some time, and arrested on the day of my departure. This person, a sailor, of turbulent character, and whom I suspected of Bonapartism, has been secretly to the isle of Elba. There he saw the grand-marshal, who charged him with a verbal

of police appeared at the door, pale, trembling, and as if ready to faint Villefort was about to retire, but M. de Blacas, taking his hand, restrained him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OGRE OF CORSICA.

AT the sight of this agitation Louis XVIII. pushed from him violently the table at which he was writing.

"What ails you, M. le Baron?" he exclaimed. "You appear quite aghast. This trouble—this hesitation—have they anything to do with what M. de Blacas has told me, and M. de Villefort has just confirmed?" M. de Blacas moved suddenly towards the baron, but the fright of the courtier precluded the triumph of the statesman; and besides, as matters were, it was much more to his advantage that the prefect of police should triumph over him than that he should humiliate the prefect.

"Sire——" stammered the baron.

"Well, what is it?" asked Louis XVIII. The minister of police, giving way to an impulse of despair, was about to throw himself at the feet of Louis XVIII., who retreated a step and frowned.

"Will you speak?" he said.

"Oh! sire, what a dreadful misfortune! I am, indeed, to be pitied. I can never forgive myself!"

"Monsieur," said Louis XVIII., "I command you to speak."

"Well, sire, the usurper left Elba on the 26th February, and landed on the 1st of March."

"And where? In Italy?" asked the king eagerly:

"In France, sire,—at a small port, near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan."

"The usurper landed in France, near Antibes, in the Gulf of Juan, 250 leagues from Paris, on the 1st of March, and you only acquired this information to-day, the 4th of March! Well, sir, what you tell me is impossible. You must have received a false report, or you have gone mad."

"Alas! sire, it is but too true!" Louis made a gesture of indescribable anger and alarm, and then drew himself up as if this sudden blow had struck him at the same moment in heart and countenance.

"In France!" he cried, "the usurper in France! Then they did not watch over this man. Who knows? they were, perhaps in league with him."

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed the Comte de Blacas, "M. Dandr  is not a man to be accused of treason! Sire, we have all been blind, and the minister of police has shared the general blindness, that is all."

"But——" said Villefort, and then suddenly checking himself, he was silent; then he continued, "Your pardon, sire," he said, bowing, "my zeal carried me away. Will your majesty deign to excuse me?"

"Speak, sir, speak boldly," replied Louis. "You alone forewarned us of the evil; now try and aid us with the remedy!"

"Sire," said Villefort, "the usurper is detested in the south; and it seems to me that if he ventured into the south, it would be easy to raise Languedoc and Provence against him."

"Yes, assuredly," replied the minister; "but he is advancing by Gap and Sisteron."

"Advancing! he is advancing!" said Louis XVIII. "Is he then advancing on Paris?" The minister of police kept a silence which was equivalent to a complete avowal.

"And Dauphiné, sir?" inquired the king, of Villefort. "Do you think it possible to rouse that as well as Provence?"

"Sire, I am sorry to tell your majesty a cruel fact: but the feeling in Dauphiné is far from resembling that of Provence or Languedoc. The mountaineers are Bonapartists, sire."

"Then," murmured Louis, "he was well informed. And how many men had he with him?"

"I do not know, sire," answered the minister of police.

"What! you do not know? Have you neglected to obtain information of this circumstance? It is true this is of small importance," he added with a withering smile.

"Sire, it was impossible to learn; the despatch simply stated the fact of the landing and the route taken by the usurper."

"And how did this despatch reach you?" inquired the king. The minister bowed his head, and whilst a deep colour overspread his cheeks, he stammered out,—

"By the telegraph, sire."—Louis XVIII. advanced a step, and folded his arms over his chest as Napoleon would have done.

"So then!" he exclaimed, turning pale with anger, "seven conjoined and allied armies overthrew that man. A miracle of Heaven replaced me on the throne of my fathers after five-and-twenty years of exile. I have, during those five-and-twenty years, studied, sounded, analysed the men and things of that France which was promised to me; and when I have attained the end of all my wishes, the power I hold in my hands bursts and shatters me to atoms!"

"Sire, it is fatality!" murmured the minister, feeling that such a pressure, however light for destiny, was sufficient to overwhelm a man.

"What our enemies say of us is then true. We have learnt nothing, forgotten nothing! If I were betrayed as he was, I would console myself:

on at sixty leagues from the coast of France! Well, then, see, here is a gentleman who had none of these resources at his disposal—a gentleman, only a simple magistrate, who learned more than you with all your police, and who would have saved my crown, if, like you, he had the power of directing a telegraph.” The look of the minister of police was turned with concentrated spite on Villefort, who bent his head with the modesty of triumph.

“I do not mean that for you, Blacas,” continued Louis XVIII.; “for if you have discovered nothing, at least you have had the good sense to persevere in your suspicions. Any other than yourself would have considered the disclosure of M. de Villefort as insignificant, or else dictated by a venal ambition.” These words were meant to allude to those which the minister of police had uttered with so much confidence an hour before.

Villefort understood the drift of the king. Any other person would, perhaps, have been too much overcome by the intoxication of praise; but he feared to make for himself a mortal enemy of the police minister, although he perceived Dandr  was irrevocably lost. In fact, the minister, who, in the plenitude of his power, had been unable to penetrate Napoleon’s secret, might in the convulsions of his dying throes penetrate his (Villefort’s) secret, for which end he had but to interrogate Dant s. He therefore came to the rescue of the crest-fallen minister, instead of aiding to crush him.

“Sire,” said Villefort, “the rapidity of the event must prove to your majesty that God alone can prevent it, by raising a tempest; what your majesty is pleased to attribute to me as profound perspicacity is simply owing to chance; and I have profited by that chance, like a good and devoted servant—that’s all. Do not attribute to me more than I deserve, sire, that your majesty may never have occasion to recall the first opinion you have been pleased to form of me.” The minister of police thanked the young man by an eloquent look, and Villefort understood that he had succeeded in his design; that is to say, that without forfeiting the gratitude of the king, he had made a friend of one on whom, in case of necessity, he might rely.

“Tis well!” resumed the king. “And now, gentlemen,” he continued, turning towards M. de Blacas and the minister of police, “I have no further occasion for you, and you may retire; what now remains to do is in the department of the minister of war.”

“Fortunately, sire,” said M. de Blacas, “we can rely on the army; your majesty knows how every report confirms their loyalty and attachment.”

“Do not mention reports, sir, to me! for I know now what confidence to place in them. Yet, *  propos* of reports, M. le Baron, what intelligence have you as to our affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques?”

“The affair in the Rue Saint-Jacques!” exclaimed Villefort, unable to repress an exclamation. Then, suddenly pausing, he added, “Your pardon; sire, but my devotion to your majesty has made me forget, not the respect I have, for that is too deeply engraven in my heart, but the rules of etiquette.”

“Say and act, sir!” replied the king; “you have acquired the right to inquire.”

“Sire,” replied the minister of police, “I came this moment to give your majesty fresh information which I had obtained on this head, when your majesty’s attention was attracted by this terrible affair of the gulf, and now these facts will cease to interest your majesty.”

“On the contrary, sir,—on the contrary,” said Louis XVIII., “this affair seems to me to have a decided connection with that which occupies our attention; and the death of General Quesnel will, perhaps, put us on the

direct track of a great internal conspiracy." At the name of General Quesnel, Villefort trembled.

"All combines, sir," said the minister of police, "to insure the probability that this death is not the result of a suicide, as we at first believed, but of an assassination. General Quesnel had quitted, as it appears, a Bonapartist club when he disappeared. An unknown person had been with him that morning, and made an appointment with him in the Rue Saint-Jacques; unfortunately, the general's valet-de-chambre, who was dressing his hair at the moment when the stranger entered, heard the street mentioned, but did not catch the number." As the police minister related this to the king, Villefort, who seemed as if his very existence hung on his lips, turned alternately red and pale. The king looked towards him.

"Do you not think with me, M. de Villefort, that General Quesnel, whom they believed attached to the usurper, but who was really entirely devoted to me, has perished the victim of a Bonapartist ambush?"

"It is probable, sire," replied Villefort. "But is this all that is known?"

"They are on the traces of the man who appointed the meeting with him."

"On his traces?" said Villefort.

"Yes, the servant has given his description. He is a man of from fifty to fifty-two years of age, brown, with black eyes, covered with shaggy eyebrows, and a thick moustache. He was dressed in a blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, and wore at his button-hole the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honour. Yesterday an individual was followed exactly corresponding with this description, but he was lost sight of at the corner of the Rue de la Jussienne and the Rue Coq-Héron." Villefort leaned on the back of an arm-chair; for in proportion as the minister of police spoke, he felt his legs bend under him; but when he learnt that the unknown had escaped the vigilance of the agent who followed him, he breathed again.

"Continue to seek for this man, sir," said the king to the minister of

the meanwhile" (the king here detached the cross of the Legion of Honour he usually wore over his blue coat, near the cross of St. Louis, above the order of Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel and St. Lazare, and gave it to Villefort)—"in the meanwhile take this cross."

"Sire," said Villefort, "your majesty mistakes; this cross is that of an officer."

"*Ma foi !*" said Louis XVIII., "take it, such as it is, for I have not the time to procure you another. Blacas, let it be your care to see that the brevet is made out and sent to M. de Villefort." Villefort's eyes were filled with tears of joy and pride; he took the cross and kissed it.

"And now," he said, "may I inquire what are the orders with which your majesty deigns to honour me?"

"Take what rest you require, and remember that, unable to serve me here in Paris, you may be of the greatest service to me at Marseilles."

"Sire," replied Villefort, bowing, "in an hour I shall have quitted Paris."

"Go, sir," said the king; "and should I forget you (kings' memories are short), do not be afraid to bring yourself to my recollection. M. le Baron, send for the minister of war. Blacas, remain."

"Ah, sir," said the minister of police to Villefort, as they left the Tuilleries, "you enter by the right door—your fortune is made."

"Will it be long first?" muttered Villefort, saluting the minister, whose career was ended, and looking about him for a hackney-coach. One passed at the moment, which he hailed: he gave his address to the driver, and springing in, threw himself on the seat, and gave loose to dreams of ambition.

Ten minutes afterwards Villefort reached his hotel, ordered his horses in two hours, and desired to have his breakfast brought to him. He was about to commence his repast when the sound of the bell, rung by a free and firm hand, was heard. The valet opened the door, and Villefort heard his name pronounced.

"Who could know that I was here already?" said the young man.

The valet entered.

"Well," said Villefort, "what is it?—Who rang?—Who asked for me?"

"A stranger who will not send in his name."

"A stranger who will not send in his name! What can he want with me?"

"He wishes to speak to you."

"To me?"—"Yes."

"Did he mention my name?"—"Yes."

"What sort of person is he?"—"Why, sir, a man of about fifty."

"Short or tall?"—"About your own height, sir."

"Dark or fair?"—"Dark,—very dark: with black eyes, black hair, black eyebrows."

"And how dressed?" asked Villefort, quickly.—"In a blue frock-coat, buttoned up close, decorated with the Legion of Honour."

"It is he!" said Villefort, turning pale.

"Eh, *pardieu !*" said the individual whose description we have twice given, entering the door, "what a great deal of ceremony! Is it the custom in Marseilles for sons to keep their fathers waiting in their ante-rooms?"

"Father!" cried Villefort, "then I was not deceived; I felt sure it must be you."

"Well, then, if you felt so sure," replied the new comer, putting his cane in a corner and his hat on a chair, "allow me to say, my dear Gérard, that it was not very filial of you to keep me waiting at the door."

"Leave us, Germain," said Villefort. The servant quitted the apartment with evident signs of astonishment.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER AND SON.

M. NOIRTIER—for it was, indeed, he who entered—followed with his eyes the servant until he had closed the door, and then, fearing, no doubt, that he might be overheard in the ante-chamber, he opened the door again: nor was the precaution useless, as appeared from the rapid retreat of Germain, who proved that he was not exempt from the sin which ruined our first parents. M. Noirtier then took the trouble to close carefully the door of the ante-chamber, then that of the bed-chamber, and then extended his hand to Villefort, who had followed all his motions with surprise which he could not conceal.

"Well, now, my dear Gérard," said he to the young man, with a very significant look, "do you know you seem as if you were not very glad to see me?"

"My dear father," said Villefort, "I am, on the contrary, delighted; but I so little expected your visit, that it has somewhat overcome me."

"But, my dear fellow," replied M. Noirtier, seating himself, "I might say the same thing to you, when you announce to me your wedding for the 28th of February, and on the 4th of March here you are in Paris."

"And if I have come, my dear father," said Gérard, drawing closer to M. Noirtier, "do not complain, for it is for you that I came, and my journey will save you."

"Ah, indeed!" said M. Noirtier, stretching himself out at his ease in the chair. "Really, pray tell me all about it, M. le Magistrat, for it must be interesting."

"Father, you have heard speak of a certain club of Bonapartists held in

dear father, would probably ere this have been shot." Villefort's father laughed.

"Come, come," said he, "it appears that the Restoration has learned from the Empire the mode of settling affairs speedily. Shot, my dear boy! you go ahead with a vengeance. Where is this letter you talk about?" I know you too well to suppose you would allow such a thing to pass you.

"I burnt it, for fear that even a fragment should remain; for that letter must have effected your condemnation."

"And the destruction of your future prospects," replied Noirtier; "yes, I can easily comprehend that. But I have nothing to fear whilst I have you to protect me."

"I do better than that, sir—I save you."

"You do? why, really, the thing becomes more and more dramatic—explain yourself."

"I must refer again to the club in the Rue Saint-Jacques."

"It appears that this club is rather a bore to the police. Why didn't they search more vigilantly? they would have found——"

"They have not found; but they are on the track."

"Yes, that's the usual phrase; I know it well. When the police is at fault, it declares that it is on the track; and the government patiently awaits the day when it comes to say, with a sneaking air, that the track is lost."

"Yes, but they have found a corpse; the general has been killed, and in all countries they call that a murder."

"A murder do you call it? why, there is nothing to prove that the general was murdered. People are found every day in the Seine, having thrown themselves in, or have been drowned from not knowing how to swim."

"Father, you know very well that the general was not a man to drown himself in despair; and people do not bathe in the Seine in the month of January. No, no, do not mistake; this death was a murder in every sense of the word."

"And who thus designated it?"—"The king himself."

"The king! I thought he was philosopher enough to allow that there was no murder in politics. In politics, my dear fellow, you know, as well as I do, there are no men, but ideas—no feelings, but interests; in politics we do not kill a man, we only remove an obstacle, that is all. Would you like to know how matters have progressed? well, I will tell you. It was thought reliance might be placed in General Quesnel; he was recommended to us from the isle of Elba; one of us went to him, and invited him to the Rue Saint-Jacques, where he would find some friends. He came there, and the plan was unfolded to him of the leaving Elba, the projected landing, &c. When he had heard and comprehended all to the fullest extent, he replied that he was a royalist. Then all looked at each other,—he was made to take an oath, and did so, but with such an ill grace that it was really tempting Providence to swear thus; and yet, in spite of that, the general was allowed to depart free—perfectly free. Yet he did not return home. What could that mean? why, my dear fellow, that on leaving us he lost his way, that's all. A murder! really, Villefort, you surprise me. You, a deputy procureur, to found an accusation on such bad premises! Did I ever say to you, when you were fulfilling your character as a royalist, and cut off the head of one of my party, 'My son, you have committed a murder?' No, I said, 'Very well, sir, you have gained the victory; to-morrow, perchance, it will be our turn.'"

"But, father, take care when our turn comes, our revenge will be sweeping."

"I do not understand you."

"You rely on the usurper's return?"—"We do."

"You are mistaken; he will not advance two leagues into the interior of France without being followed, tracked, and caught like a wild beast."

"My dear fellow, the emperor is at this moment on the way to Grenoble; on the 10th or 12th he will be at Lyons, and on the 20th or 25th at Paris."

"The population will rise."—"Yes, to go and meet him."

"He has but a handful of men with him; and armies will be despatched against him."

"Yes, to escort him into the capital. Really, my dear Gérard, you are but a child; you think yourself well informed because a telegraph has told you three days after the landing, 'The usurper has landed at Cannes with several men. He is pursued.' But where is he? what is he doing? You do not know well; and in this way they will pursue him to Paris, without drawing a trigger."

"Grenoble and Lyons are faithful cities, and will oppose to him an impassable barrier."

"Grenoble will open her gates to him with enthusiasm—all Lyons will hasten to welcome him. Believe me, we are as well informed as you: and our police is as good as your own. Would you like a proof of it? well, you wished to conceal your journey from me; and yet I knew of your arrival half an hour after you had passed the barrier. You gave your direction to no one but your postilion, yet I have your address, and in proof I am here the very instant you are going to sit at table. Ring, then, if you please, for a second knife, fork, and plate, and we will dine together."

"Indeed!" replied Villefort, looking at his father with astonishment, "you really do seem very well informed."

"True," said Noirtier, looking carelessly around him, "true, if this individual were not warned as he is ;" and he added with a smile, "he will consequently change looks and costume." At these words he rose, and put off his frock-coat and cravat, went towards a table on which lay all the requisites of the toilette for his son, lathered his face, took a razor, and, with a firm hand, cut off the whiskers that might have compromised him and gave the police so decided a trace. Villefort watched him with alarm, not divested of admiration.

His whiskers cut off, Noirtier gave another turn to his hair ; took, instead of his black cravat, a coloured neckerchief which lay at the top of an open portmanteau ; put on, in lieu of his blue and high-buttoned frock-coat, a coat of Villefort's, of dark brown, and sloped away in front ; tried on before the glass a narrow-brimmed hat of his son's, which appeared to fit him perfectly, and, leaving his cane in the corner where he had deposited it, he made to whistle in his powerful hand a small bamboo switch, which the dandy deputy used when he walked, and which aided in giving him that easy swagger which was one of his principal characteristics.

"Well," he said, turning towards his wondering son, when this disguise was completed, "well, do you think your police will recognise me now ?"

"No, father," stammered Villefort ; "at least, I hope not."

"And now, my dear boy," continued Noirtier, "I rely on your prudence to remove all the things which I leave in your care."

"Oh, rely on me," said Villefort.

"Yes, yes ! and now I believe you are right, and that you have really saved my life ; but be assured I will return the obligation to you hereafter." Villefort shook his head.

"You are not convinced yet ?"—"I hope, at least, that you may be mistaken."

"Shall you see the king again ?"—"Perhaps."

"Would you pass in his eyes for a prophet ?"—"Prophets of evil are not in favour at the court, father."

"True, but some day they do them justice ; and supposing a second restoration, you would then pass for a great man."

"Well, what should I say to the king ?"

"Say this to him :—'Sire, you are deceived as to the feeling in France, as to the opinions of the towns, and the prejudices of the army ; he whom in Paris you call the ogre of Corsica, who at Nevers is styled the usurper, is already saluted as Bonaparte at Lyons, and emperor at Grenoble. You think he is tracked, pursued, captured ; he is advancing as rapidly as his own eagles. The soldiers you believe dying with hunger, worn out with fatigue, ready to desert, increase like atoms of snow about the rolling ball which hastens onward. Sire, go, leave France to its real master, to him who did not buy, but acquired it ; go, sire, not that you incur any risk, for your adversary is powerful enough to show you mercy, but because it would be humiliating for a grandson of Saint Louis to owe his life to the man of Arcola, Marengo, Austerlitz.' Tell him this ; Gérard ; or, rather, tell him nothing. Keep your journey a secret ; do not boast of what you have come to Paris to do, or have done ; return with all speed ; enter Marseilles at night, and your house by the back-door, and there remain, quiet, submissive, secret, and, above all, inoffensive ; for this time, I swear to you, we shall act like powerful men who know their enemies. Go, my son—go, my dear Gérard, and by your obedience to my paternal orders, or, if you prefer it, friendly counsels, we will keep you in your place. This will be," added Noirtier, with a smile, "one means by which you

may a second time save me, if the political balance should one day place you high and me low. Adieu, my dear Gérard, and at your next journey alight at my door." Noirtier left the room when he had finished, with the same calmness that had characterized him during the whole of this remarkable and trying conversation. Villefort, pale and agitated, ran to the window, put aside the curtain, and saw him pass, cool and collected, by two or three ill-looking men at the corner of the street, who were there, perhaps, to arrest a man with black whiskers, and a blue frock-coat, and hat with broad brim.

Villefort stood watching, breathless, until his father had disappeared at the Rue Bussy. Then he turned to the various articles he had left behind him, put at the bottom of his portmanteau his black cravat and blue frock-coat, threw the hat into a dark closet, broke the cane into small bits and flung it in the fire, put on his travelling-cap, and calling his valet, checked with a look the thousand questions he was ready to ask, paid his bill, sprang into his carriage, which was ready, learned at Lyons that Bonaparte had entered Grenoble, and in the midst of the tumult which prevailed along the road, at length reached Marseilles, a prey to all the hopes and fears which enter into the heart of man with ambition and its first successes.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS.

M. NOIRTIER was a true prophet, and things progressed rapidly, as he had predicted. Every one knows the history of the famous return from Elba, a return which, without example in the past, will probably remain

parte accused him of "*moderation*"—but sufficiently influential to make a demand in favour of Dantès.

Villefort retained his place, but his marriage was put off until a more favourable opportunity. If the emperor remained on the throne, Gérard required a different alliance to aid his career ; if Louis XVIII. returned, the influence of M. Saint-Méran and himself became double, and the marriage must be still more suitable. The deputy-procureur was, therefore, the first magistrate of Marseilles, when one morning his door opened, and M. Morrel was announced.

Any one else would have hastened to receive him ; but Villefort was a man of ability, and he knew this would be a sign of weakness. He made Morrel wait in the ante-chamber, although he had no one with him, for the simple reason that the king's procureur always makes every one wait ; and after a quarter of an hour passed in reading the papers, he ordered M. Morrel to be admitted.

Morrel expected Villefort would be dejected ; he found him, as he had found him six weeks before, calm, firm, and full of that glacial politeness, that most insurmountable barrier which separates the well-bred and the vulgar man.

He had penetrated into Villefort's cabinet, convinced the magistrate would tremble at the sight of him ; on the contrary, he felt a cold shudder all over him when he beheld Villefort seated, his elbow on his desk, and his head leaning on his hand. He stopped at the door ; Villefort gazed at him as if he had some difficulty in recognising him ; then, after a brief interval, during which the honest shipowner turned his hat in his hands.

"M. Morrel, I believe ?" said Villefort.—"Yes, sir."

"Come nearer," said the magistrate, with a patronising wave of the hand and tell me to what circumstance I owe the honour of this visit."

"Do you not guess, monsieur ?" asked Morrel.

"Not in the least ; but if I can serve you in any way I shall be delighted."

"Everything depends on you."—"Explain yourself, pray."

"Monsieur," said Morrel, recovering his assurance as he proceeded, "do you recollect that a few days before the landing of his majesty the emperor, I came to intercede for a young man, the mate of my ship, who was accused of being concerned in a correspondence with the isle of Elba ; and what was the other day a crime is to-day a title to favour. You then served Louis XVIII., and you did not show any favour—it was your duty ; to-day you serve Napoleon, and you ought to protect him—it is equally your duty ; I come, therefore, to ask what has become of him ?"

Villefort made a violent effort. "What is his name ?" said he ; "tell me his name ?"

"Edmond Dantès."

Villefort would, evidently have rather stood opposite the muzzle of a pistol at five-and-twenty paces than have heard this name pronounced ; but he betrayed no emotion.

"Dantès," repeated he, "Edmond Dantès."—"Yes, monsieur." Villefort opened a large register, then went to a table, from the table turned to his registers, and then, turning to Morrel :

"Are you quite sure you are not mistaken, monsieur ?" said he, in the most natural tone in the world.

Had Morrel been a more quick-sighted man, or better versed in these matters, he would have been surprised at the king's procureur answering him on such a subject, instead of referring him to the governors of the prison or the prefect of the department. But Morrel, disappointed in his

expectations of exciting fear, saw only in its place condescension. Villefort had calculated rightly.

"No," said Morrel, "I am not mistaken. I have known him ten years, and the last four he has been in my service. Do not you recollect, I came about six weeks ago to beseech your clemency, as I come to-day to beseech your justice—you received me very coldly. Oh, the royalists were very severe with the Bonapartists in those days."

"Monsieur," returned Villefort, "I was then a royalist, because I believed the Bourbons not only the heirs to the throne but the chosen of the nation. The miraculous return of Napoleon has conquered me; the legitimate monarch is he who is loved by his people."

"That's right!" cried Morrel. "I like to hear you speak thus, and I augur well for Edmond from it."

"Wait a moment," said Villefort, turning over the leaves of a register; "I have it—a sailor, who was about to marry a young Catalan girl. I recollect now, it was a very serious charge."—"How so?"

"You know that when he left here he was taken to the Palais de Justice."—"Well?"

"I made my report to the authorities at Paris, and a week after, he was carried off."

"Carried off!" said Morrel. "What can they have done with him?"

"Oh, he has been taken to Fenestrelles, to Pignerol, or to the Iles Sainte-Marguerite. Some fine morning he will return to assume the command of your vessel."

"Come when he will, it shall be kept for him. But how is it he is not already returned? It seems to me the first care of government should be to set at liberty those who have suffered for their adherence to it."

"Do not be too hasty, M. Morrel," replied Villefort. "The order of imprisonment came from high authority, and the order for his liberation

"Sit down there," said Villefort, giving up his place to Morrel, and write what I dictate."—"Will you be so good?"

"Certainly. But lose no time; we have lost too much already."

"That is true. Only think that perhaps this poor young man is pining in captivity." Villefort shuddered at this picture; but he was too far gone to recede, Dantès must be crushed beneath the weight of Villefort's ambition.

Villefort dictated a petition, in which, from an excellent intention, no doubt, Dantès' services were exaggerated, and he was made out one of the most active agents of Napoleon's return. It was evident that at the sight of this document the minister would instantly release him. The petition finished, Villefort read it aloud.

"That will do," said he; "leave the rest to me."

"Will the petition go soon?"—"To-day."

"Countersigned by you?"—"The best thing I can do will be to certify the truth of the contents of your petition." And, sitting down, Villefort wrote the certificate at the bottom.

"What more is to be done?"—"I will answer for everything." This assurance charmed Morrel, who took leave of Villefort, and hastened to announce to old Dantès that he would soon see his son.

As for Villefort, instead of sending to Paris, he carefully preserved the petition that so fearfully compromised Dantès, in the hopes of an event that seemed not unlikely,—that is, a second restoration. Dantès remained a prisoner, and heard not the noise of the fall of Louis XVIII.'s throne.

Twice during the Hundred Days had Morrel renewed his demand, and twice had Villefort soothed him with promises. At last there was Waterloo, and Morrel came no more: he had done all that was in his power, and any fresh attempt would only compromise himself uselessly.

Louis XVIII. remounted the throne, Villefort demanded and obtained the situation of king's procureur at Toulouse, and a fortnight afterwards married Renée.

Danglars comprehended the full extent of the wretched fate that overwhelmed Dantès, and, like all men of small abilities, he termed this a *decree of Providence*. But when Napoleon returned to Paris Danglars' heart failed him, and he feared at every instant to behold Dantès eager for vengeance: he therefore informed M. Morrel of his wish to quit the sea, and obtained a recommendation from him to a Spanish merchant, into whose service he entered at the end of March, that is, ten or twelve days after Napoleon's return. He then left for Madrid, and was no more heard of.

Fernand understood nothing except that Dantès was absent. What had become of him he cared not to inquire. Only, during the respite the absence of his rival afforded him, he reflected, partly on the means of deceiving Mercédès as to the cause of his absence, partly on plans of emigration and abduction, as from time to time he sat sad and motionless on the summit of Cape Pharo, at the spot from whence Marseilles and the village des Catalans are visible, watching for the apparition of a young and handsome man, who was for him also the messenger of vengeance. Fernand's mind was made up: he would shoot Dantès, and then kill himself. But Fernand was mistaken; a man of his disposition never kills himself, for he constantly hopes.

During this time the empire made a last appeal, and every man in France capable of bearing arms rushed to obey the summons of their emperor. Fernand departed with the rest, bearing with him the terrible

thought that perhaps his rival was behind him, and would marry Mercédès. Had Fernand really meant to kill himself, he would have done so when he parted from Mercédès. His devotion, and the compassion he showed for her misfortunes, produced the effect they always produce on noble minds—Mercédès had always had a sincere regard for Fernand, and this was now strengthened by gratitude.

"My brother," said she, as she placed his knapsack on his shoulders, "be careful of yourself, for if you are killed, I shall be alone in the world." These words infused a ray of hope into Fernand's heart. Should Dantès not return, Mercédès might one day be his. Mercédès was left alone to gaze on this vast plain that had never seemed so barren, and the sea that had never seemed so vast.

Sometimes she stood mute and motionless as a statue, gazing towards Marseilles ; at other times gazing on the sea, and debating as to whether it were not better to cast herself into the abyss of the ocean, and thus end her woes. It was not want of courage that prevented her putting this resolution into execution ; but her religious feelings came to her aid and saved her. Caderousse was, like Fernand, enrolled in the army, but, being married and eight years older, he was merely sent to the frontier. Old Dantès, who was only sustained by hope, lost all hope at Napoleon's downfall. Five months after he had been separated from his son, and almost at the very hour at which he was arrested, he breathed his last in Mercédès' arms. M. Morrel paid the expenses of his funeral and a few small debts the poor old man had contracted.

There was more than benevolence in this action ; there was courage ; for to assist, even on his death-bed, the father of so dangerous a Bonapartist as Dantès, was stigmatised as a crime.

"Let us first send for two soldiers," said the governor. "The prisoners sometimes, through mere uneasiness of life, and in order to be sentenced to death, commit acts of useless violence, and you might fall a victim."

"Take all needful precautions," replied the inspector.

Two soldiers were accordingly sent for, and the inspector descended a stair so foul, so humid, so dark, that the very sight affected the eye, the smell, and the respiration.

"Oh!" cried the inspector, "who can live here?"

"A most dangerous conspirator, a man we are ordered to keep the most strict watch over, as he is daring and resolute."

"He is alone"——"Certainly."

"How long has he been there?"——"Nearly a year."

"Was he placed here when he first arrived?"——"No, not until he attempted to kill the turnkey."

"To kill the turnkey?"——"Yes, the very one who is lighting us. Is it not true, Antoine?" asked the governor.

"True enough; he wanted to kill me!" replied the turnkey.

"He must be mad," said the inspector.

"He is worse than that,—he is a devil!" returned the turnkey.

"Shall I complain of him?" demanded the inspector.

"Oh, no; it is useless. Besides he is almost mad now, and in another year he will be quite so."

"So much the better for him,—he will suffer less," said the inspector. He was, as this remark shows, a man full of philanthropy, and in every way fit for his office.

"You are right, sir," replied the governor; "and this remark proves that you have deeply considered the subject. Now we have in a dungeon about twenty feet distant, and to which you descend by another stair an abbé, ancient leader of a party in Italy, who has been here since 1811, and in 1813 he went mad, and the change is astonishing. He used to weep, he now laughs; he grew thin, he now grows fat. You had better see him, for his madness is amusing."

"I will see them both," returned the inspector; "I must conscientiously perform my duty." This was the inspector's first visit: he wished to display his authority.

"Let us visit this one first," added he.

"Willingly," replied the governor; and he signed to the turnkey to open the door. At the sound of the key turning in the lock, and the creaking of the hinges, Dantès, who was crouched in a corner of the dungeon raised his head. At the sight of a stranger, lighted by two turnkeys, accompanied by two soldiers, and to whom the governor spoke bare-headed, Dantès, who guessed the truth, and that the moment to address himself to the superior authorities was come, sprang forward with clasped hands.

The soldiers presented their bayonets, for they thought he was about to attack the inspector, and the latter recoiled two or three steps. Dantès saw he was represented as a dangerous prisoner. Then, infusing all the humility he possessed into his eyes and voice, he addressed the inspector, and sought to inspire him with pity.

The inspector listened attentively; then, turning to the governor, observed, "He will become religious—he is already more gentle; he is afraid, and retreated before the bayonets—madmen are not afraid of anything; I made some curious observations on this at Charenton." Then, turning to the prisoner, "What do you demand?" said he.

"What crime I have committed—to be tried ; and if I am guilty, may be shot ; if innocent, I may be set at liberty."

"Are you well fed?" said the inspector.

"I believe so—I know not, but that matters little ; what matters really, not only to me, but to every one, is, that an innocent man should languish in prison, the victim of an infamous denunciation."

"You are very humble to-day," remarked the governor ; "you are not so always ; the other day, for instance, when you tried to kill the turnkey."

"It is true, sir, and I beg his pardon ; for he has always been very good to me : but I was mad."

"And you are not so any longer?"

"No ! captivity has subdued me—I have been here so long."

"So long?—when were you arrested, then?" asked the inspector.

"The 28th of February, 1815, at half-past two in the afternoon."

"To-day is the 30th of June, 1816 : why, it is but seventeen months."

"Only seventeen months!" replied Dantès. "Oh, you do not know what is seventeen months in prison !—seventeen ages rather, especially to a man who, like me, had arrived at the summit of his ambition—to a man who, like me, was on the point of marrying a woman he adored, who saw an honourable career open before him, and who loses all in an instant—who sees his prospects destroyed, and is ignorant of the fate of his affianced wife, and whether his aged father be still living ! Seventeen months captivity to a sailor accustomed to the boundless ocean, is a worse punishment than human crime ever merited. Have pity on me, then, and ask for me, not indulgence, but a trial—let me know my crime and my sentence, for incertitude is worse than all."

"We shall see," said the inspector ; then, turning to the governor, "On my word, the poor devil touches me. You must show me the proofs

"What is his folly?"

"He fancies he possesses an immense treasure. The first year he offered government a million of francs (£40,000) for his release; the second, two; the third, three; and so on progressively. He is now in his fifth year of captivity; he will ask to speak to you in private, and offer you five millions."

"How curious!—what is his name?"—"L'Abbé Faria."

"No. 27," said the inspector.

"It is here; unlock the door, Antoine." The turnkey obeyed, and the inspector gazed curiously into the chamber of the *mad abbé*.

In the centre of the cell, in a circle traced with a fragment of plaster detached from the wall, sat a man whose tattered garments scarcely covered him. He was drawing in this circle geometrical lines, and seemed as much absorbed in his problem as Archimedes when the soldier of Marcellus slew him.

He did not move at the sound of the door, and continued his problem until the flash of the torches lighted up with an unwonted glare the sombre walls of his cell; then, raising his head, he perceived with astonishment the number of persons in his cell. He hastily seized the coverlid of his bed, and wrapped it round him.

"What do you demand?" said the inspector.

"I, monsieur!" replied the abbé, with an air of surprise—"I demand nothing."

"You do not understand," continued the inspector; "I am sent here by government to visit the prisoners, and hear the requests of the prisoners."

"Oh, that is different," cried the abbé; "and we shall understand each other, I hope."

"There now," whispered the governor, "it is just as I told you."

"Monsieur," continued the prisoner, "I am the Abbé Faria, born at Rome. I was for twenty years Cardinal Spada's secretary; I was arrested, why I know not, in 1811; since then I have demanded my liberty from the Italian and French government."

"Why from the French government?"

"Because I was arrested at Piombino; and I presume that, like Milan and Florence, Piombino has become the capital of some French department."

"Ah!" said the inspector, "you have not the latest intelligence from Italy."

"They date from the day on which I was arrested," returned the Abbé Faria; "and as the emperor had created the kingdom of Rome for his infant son, I presume that he has realised the dream of Machiavel and Cæsar Borgia, which was to make Italy one vast kingdom."

"Monsieur," returned the inspector, "Providence has changed this gigantic plan you advocate so warmly."

"It is the only means of rendering Italy happy and independent."

"Very possibly; only I am not come to discuss politics, but to inquire if you have anything to ask or to complain of."

"The food is the same as in other prisons,—that is, very bad; the lodging is very unwholesome, but, on the whole, passable for a dungeon; but it is not that which I speak of, but a secret I have to reveal of the greatest importance."

"We are coming to the point," whispered the governor.

"It is for that reason I am delighted to see you," continued the abbé, "although you have disturbed me in a most important calculation, which,

if it succeeded, would possibly change Newton's system. Could you allow me a few words in private?"

"What did I tell you?" said the governor.

"You knew him," returned the inspector.

"What you ask is impossible, monsieur," continued he, addressing Faria.

"But," said the abbé, "I would speak to you of a large sum, amounting to five millions."

"The very sum you named," whispered, in his turn, the inspector.

"However," continued Faria, perceiving the inspector was about to depart, "it is not absolutely necessary we should be alone; monsieur the governor can be present."

"Unfortunately," said the governor, "I know beforehand what you are about to say; it concerns your treasures, does it not?" Faria fixed his eyes on him with an expression that would have convinced any one else of his sanity.

"Doubtless," said he; "of what else should I speak?"

"Monsieur l'Inspecteur," continued the governor, "I can tell you the story as well, for it has been dinned in my ears for the last four or five years."

"That proves," returned the abbé, "that you are like the idols of Holy Writ, who have ears and hear not."

"The government does not want your treasures," replied the inspector; "keep them until you are liberated." The abbé's eyes glistened; he seized the inspector's hand.

"But what if I am not liberated," cried he, "and am detained here until my death? Had not government better profit by it? I will offer six millions, and I will content myself with the rest."

"On my word," said the inspector, in a low tone, "had I not been told beforehand this man was mad, I should believe what he says."

"I am not mad!" replied Faria, with that acuteness of hearing peculiar

"He has been wealthy once, perhaps?" said the inspector.

"Or dreamed he was, and awoke mad."

"After all," said the inspector, "if he had been rich, he would not have been here." Thus finished the adventure of the Abbé Faria. He remained in his cell, and this visit only increased the belief of his insanity.

Caligula or Nero, those treasure-seekers, those desirers of the impossible, would have accorded to the poor wretch, in exchange for his wealth, the liberty and the air he so earnestly prayed for. But the kings of modern ages, retained within the limits of probability, have neither the courage nor the desire. They fear the ear that hears their orders, and the eye that scrutinises their actions. Formerly they believed themselves sprung from Jupiter, and shielded by their birth; but, now-a-days, they are not inviolable.

It has always been against the policy of despotic governments to suffer the victims of their policy to reappear. As the Inquisition rarely suffered its victims to be seen with their limbs distorted and their flesh lacerated by torture, so madness is always concealed in its cell, from whence, should it depart, it is conveyed to some gloomy hospital, where the doctor recognises neither man nor mind in the mutilated being the gaoler delivers to him. The very madness of the Abbé Faria, gone mad in prison, condemned him to perpetual captivity.

The inspector kept his word with Dantès: he examined the register, and found the following note concerning him:—

EDMOND DANTÈS. { Violent Bonapartist; took an active part in the
return from Elba.
The greatest watchfulness and care to be exercised.

This note was in a different hand from the rest, which proved it had been added since his confinement. The inspector could not contend against this accusation; he simply wrote,—*"Nothing to be done."*

This visit had infused new vigour into Dantès; he had, till then, forgotten the date; but now, with a fragment of plaster, he wrote the date, 30th July, 1816; and made a mark every day, in order not to lose his reckoning again. Days and weeks passed away, then months,—Dantès still waited; he at first expected to be freed in a fortnight. This fortnight expired; he reflected the inspector would do nothing until his return to Paris; and that he would not reach there until his circuit was finished; he therefore fixed three months: three months passed away, then six more. During these ten months no favourable change had taken place; and Dantès began to fancy the inspector's visit was but a dream, an illusion of the brain.

At the expiration of a year the governor was changed; he had obtained the government of Ham. He took with him several of his subordinates, and amongst them Dantès' gaoler. A fresh governor arrived: it would have been too tedious to acquire the names of the prisoners, he learned their numbers instead. This horrible place consisted of fifty chambers; their inhabitants were designated by the number of their chamber; and the unhappy young man was no longer called Edmond Dantès,—he was now number 34.

CHAPTER XV.

NUMBER 34 AND NUMBER 27.

DANTÈS passed through all the degrees of misfortune that prisoners, forgotten in their dungeon, suffer. He commenced with pride, a natural

among the stones. Edmond recoiled from the wall, walked up and down his cell to collect his thoughts, and replaced his ear against the wall.

There could be no doubt something was passing on the other side ; the prisoner had discovered the danger, and had substituted the lever for the chisel.

Encouraged by this discovery, Edmond determined to assist the indefatigable labourer. He began by moving his bed, and sought with his eyes for anything with which he could pierce the wall, penetrate the cement, and displace a stone.

He saw nothing, he had no knife or sharp instrument, the grating of his window alone was of iron, and he had too often assured himself of its solidity. All his furniture consisted of a bed, a chair, a table, a pail, and a jug. The bed had iron clamps, but they were screwed to the wood, and it would have required a screw-driver to take them off. The table and chair had nothing, the pail had had a handle, but that had been removed.

Dantès had but one resource, which was to break the jug, and with one of the sharp fragments attack the wall. He let the jug fall on the floor, and it broke in pieces.

Dantès concealed two or three of the sharpest fragments in his bed, leaving the rest on the floor. The breaking of his jug was too natural an accident to excite suspicion. Edmond had all the night to work in, but in the darkness he could not do much, and he soon felt his instrument was blunted against something hard ; he pushed back his bed, and awaited the day.

All night he heard the subterranean workman, who continued to mine his way. The day came, the gaoler entered. Dantès told him the jug had fallen from his hands in drinking, and the gaoler went grumblingly to fetch another, without giving himself the trouble to remove the fragments of the broken one. He returned speedily, recommended the prisoner

pan contained the soup of a second prisoner ; for Dantès had remarked that it was either quite full, or half empty, according as the turnkey gave it to himself or his companion first.

The handle of this saucepan was of iron ; Dantès would have given ten years of his life in exchange for it.

The gaoler poured the contents of this saucepan into Dantès' plate, who, after eating his soup with a wooden spoon, washed the plate, which thus served for every day. In the evening Dantès placed his plate on the ground near the door ; the gaoler, as he entered, stepped on it and broke it.

This time he could not blame Dantès. He was wrong to leave it there, but the gaoler was wrong not to have looked before him.

The gaoler, therefore, contented himself with grumbling. Then he looked about him for something to pour the soup into ; Dantès' whole furniture consisted of one plate—there was no alternative.

"Leave the saucepan," said Dantès ; "you can take it away when you bring me my breakfast." This advice was to the gaoler's taste, as it spared him the necessity of ascending, descending, and ascending again. He left the saucepan.

Dantès was beside himself with joy. He rapidly devoured his food, and after waiting an hour, lest the gaoler should change his mind and return, he removed his bed, took the handle of the saucepan, inserted the point between the hewn stone and rough stones of the wall, and employed it as a lever. A slight oscillation showed Dantès all went well. At the end of an hour the stone was extricated from the wall, leaving a cavity of a foot and a half in diameter.

Dantès carefully collected the plaster, carried it into the corners of his cell, and covered it with earth. Then, wishing to make the best use of this night, in which chance, or rather his own stratagem, had placed so precious an instrument in his hands, he continued to work without ceasing. At the dawn of day he replaced the stone, pushed his bed against the wall, and lay down. The breakfast consisted of a piece of bread : the gaoler entered and placed the bread on the table.

"Well, you do not bring me another plate," said Dantès.

"No," replied the turnkey, "you destroy everything. First you break your jug, then you make me break your plate ; if all the prisoners followed your example, the government would be ruined. I shall leave you the saucepan, and pour your soup into that. So for the future I hope you will not be so destructive to your furniture."

Dantès raised his eyes to heaven, clasped his hands beneath the coverlid, and prayed. He felt more gratitude for the possession of this piece of iron than he had ever felt for anything. He had, however, remarked that the prisoner on the other side had ceased to labour ; no matter, this was a greater reason for proceeding—if his neighbour would not come to him, he would go to him. All day he toiled on untiringly, and by the evening he had succeeded in extracting ten handfuls of plaster and fragments of stone. When the hour for his gaoler's visit arrived, Dantès straightened the handle of the saucepan as well as he could, and placed it in its accustomed place. The turnkey poured his ration of soup into it, together with the fish, for thrice a week the prisoners were made to abstain from meat : this would have been a method of reckoning time, had not Dantès long ceased to do so. Having poured out the soup, the turnkey retired. Dantès wished to ascertain whether his neighbour had really ceased to work. He listened—all was silent, as it had been for the last three days. Dantès sighed : it was evident that his neighbour distrusted him. However, he

toiled on all the night without being discouraged ; but after two or three hours he encountered an obstacle. The iron made no impression, but met with a smooth surface ; Dantès touched it, and found it was a beam. This beam crossed, or rather blocked up, the hole Dantès had made ; it was necessary, therefore, to dig above or under it. The unhappy young man had not thought of this. " Oh, my God ! my God ! " murmured he, " I have so earnestly prayed to you, that I hoped my prayers had been heard. After having deprived me of my liberty, after having deprived me of death, after having recalled me to existence, my God ! have pity on me, and do not let me die in despair."

" Who talks of God and despair at the same time ? " said a voice that seemed to come from beneath the earth, and, deadened by the distance, sounded hollow and sepulchral in the young man's ears. Edmond's hair stood on end, and he rose on his knees.

" Ah ! " said he, " I hear a human voice." Edmond had not heard any one speak save his gaoler for four or five years ; and a gaoler is a man to a prisoner—he is a living door added to his door of oak, a barrier of flesh and blood added to his barriers of iron.

" In the name of heaven," cried Dantès, " speak again, though the sound of your voice terrifies me."

" Who are you ? " said the voice.

" An unhappy prisoner," replied Dantès, who made no hesitation in answering.

" Of what country ? "—" A Frenchman."

" Your name ? "—" Edmond Dantès."

" Your profession ? "—" A sailor."

" How long have you been here ? "—" Since the 28th of February, 1815."

" Your crime ? "—" I am innocent."

" But of what are you accused ? "—" Of having conspired to aid the

"All?"—"Yes; stop up your excavation carefully: do not work any more, and wait until you hear from me."

"Tell me, at least, who you are?"—"I am—I am No. 27."

"You mistrust me, then," said Dantès. Edmond fancied he heard a bitter laugh proceed from the unknown.

"Oh, I am a Christian," cried Dantès, guessing instinctively that this man meant to abandon him. "I swear to you by Him who died for us that nought shall induce me to breathe one syllable to my gaolers; but I conjure you do not abandon me. If you do, I swear to you that I will dash my brains out against the wall, and you will have my death to reproach yourself with."

"How old are you? Your voice is that of a young man."

"I do not know my age, for I have not counted the years I have been here. All I do know is, that I was just nineteen when I was arrested, the 28th of February, 1815."

"Not quite twenty-six!" murmured the voice; "at that age he cannot be a traitor."

"Oh! no, no!" cried Dantès. "I swear to you again, rather than betray you they shall hew me to pieces!"

"You have done well to speak to me, and entreat me, for I was about to form another plan, and leave you; but your age reassures me. I will not forget you. Expect me."

"When?"

"I must calculate our chances; I will give you the signal."

"But you will not leave me; you will come to me, or you will let me come to you. We will escape, and if we cannot escape we will talk; you of those whom you love, and I of those whom I love. You must love somebody?"

"No, I am alone in the world."

"Then you will love me. If you are young, I will be your comrade; if you are old, I will be your son. I have a father who is seventy if he yet lives; I only love him and a young girl called Mercédès. My father has not yet forgotten me, I am sure; but God alone knows if she loves me still: I shall love you as I loved my father."

"It is well," returned the voice; "to-morrow."

These few words were uttered with an accent that left no doubt of his sincerity; Dantès rose, dispersed the fragments with the same precaution as before, and pushed back his bed against the wall. He then gave himself up to his happiness: he would no longer be alone. He was, perhaps, about to regain his liberty; at the worst, he would have a companion; and captivity that is shared is but half captivity.

All day Dantès walked up and down his cell. He sat down occasionally on his bed, pressing his hand on his heart. At the slightest noise he bounded towards the door. Once or twice the thought crossed his mind that he might be separated from this unknown, whom he loved already; and then his mind was made up—when the gaoler moved his bed and stooped to examine the opening, he would kill him with his water jug. He would be condemned to die, but he was about to die of grief and despair when this miraculous noise recalled him to life.

The gaoler came in the evening: Dantès was on his bed. It seemed to him that thus he better guarded the unfinished opening. Doubtless there was a strange expression in his eyes, for the gaoler said, "Come, are you going mad again?"

Dantès did not answer; he feared that the emotion of his voice would

betray him. The gaoler retired, shaking his head. The night came ; Dantès hoped that his neighbour would profit by the silence to address him, but he was mistaken. The next morning, however, just as he removed his bed from the wall, he heard three knocks ; he threw himself on his knees.

"Is it you ?" said he, "I am here."—"Is your gaoler gone ?"

"Yes," said Dantès ; "he will not return until the evening ; so that we have twelve hours before us."

"I can work, then," said the voice.—"Oh yes, yes, this instant I entreat you."

In an instant the portion of the floor on which Dantès (half buried in the opening) was leaning his two hands, gave way ; he cast himself back, whilst a mass of stones and earth disappeared in a hole that opened beneath the aperture he himself had formed. Then from the bottom of this passage, the depth of which it was impossible to measure, he saw appear, first the head, then the shoulders, and lastly the body of a man, who sprang lightly into his cell.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LEARNED ITALIAN.

RUSHING towards the friend so long and ardently desired, Dantès almost carried him towards the window, in order to obtain a better view of his features by the aid of the imperfect light that struggled through the grating of the prison.

He was a man of small stature, with hair blanched rather by suffering and sorrow than years. A deep-set, penetrating eye, almost buried beneath

"I made myself some ; and with the exception of a file, I have all that are necessary—a chisel, pincers, and lever."

"Oh, how I should like to see these products of your industry and patience."

"Well, in the first place, here is my chisel." So saying, he displayed a sharp strong blade, with a handle made of beechwood.

"And with what did you contrive to make that ?" inquired Dantès.

"With one of the clamps of my bedstead ; and this very tool has sufficed me to hollow out the road by which I came hither, a distance of at least fifty feet."

"Fifty feet !" re-echoed Dantès, with a species of terror.

"Do not speak so loud, young man—don't speak so loud. It frequently occurs in a state prison like this, that persons are stationed outside the doors of the cells purposely to overhear the conversation of the prisoners."

"But they believe I am shut up alone here."

"That makes no difference."

"And you say that you penetrated a length of fifty feet to arrive here?"

"I do ; that is about the distance that separates your chamber from mine ; only, unfortunately, I did not curve aright ; for want of the necessary geometrical instruments to calculate my scale of proportion, instead of taking an ellipsis of forty feet, I have made fifty. I expected, as I told you, to reach the outer wall, pierce through it, and throw myself into the sea ; I have, however, kept along the corridor on which your chamber opens, instead of going beneath it. My labour is all in vain, for I find that the corridor looks into a courtyard filled with soldiers."

"That's true," said Dantès ; "but the corridor you speak of only bounds *one* side of my cell ; there are three others—do you know anything of their situation ?"

"This one is built against the solid rock, and it would take ten experienced miners, duly furnished with the requisite tools, as many years to perforate it. This adjoins the lower part of the governor's apartments, and were we to work our way through, we should only get into some lock-up cellars, where we must necessarily be recaptured. The fourth and last side of your cell looks out—looks out—stop a minute, now where does it open to ?"

The side which thus excited curiosity was the one in which was fixed the loophole by which the light was admitted into the chamber. This loophole, which gradually diminished as it approached the outside, until only an opening through which a child could not have passed, was, for better security, furnished with three iron bars, so as to quiet all apprehensions even in the mind of the most suspicious gaoler as to the possibility of a prisoner's escape. As the stranger finished his self-put question, he dragged the table beneath the window.

"Climb up," said he to Dantès. The young man obeyed, mounted on the table, and, divining the intentions of his companion, placed his back securely against the wall and held out both hands. The stranger, whom as yet Dantès knew only by his assumed title of the number of his cell, sprang up with an agility by no means to be expected in a person of his years, and, light and steady as the bound of a cat or a lizard, climbed from the table to the outstretched hands of Dantès, and from them to his shoulders ; then, almost doubling himself in two, for the ceiling of the dungeon prevented his holding himself erect, he managed to slip his head through the top bar of the window, so as to be able to command a perfect view from top to bottom.

An instant afterwards he hastily drew back his head, saying, "I thought so!" and sliding from the shoulders of Dantès as dexterously as he had ascended, he nimbly leapt from the table to the ground.

"What made you say those words?" asked the young man, in an anxious tone, in his turn descending from the table.

The elder prisoner appeared to meditate; "Yes," said he at length, "it is so. This side of your chamber looks out upon a kind of open gallery, where patrols are continually passing, and sentries keep watch day and night."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Certain. I saw the soldier's shako and the top of his musket; that made me draw in my head so quickly; for I was fearful he might also see me."

"Well?" inquired Dantès.

"You perceive then the utter impossibility of escaping through your dungeon?"

"Then," pursued the young man, eagerly——

"Then," answered the elder prisoner, "the will of God be done!" and as the old man slowly pronounced those words, an air of profound resignation spread itself over his care-worn countenance. Dantès gazed on the individual who could thus philosophically resign hopes so long and ardently nourished with an astonishment mingled with admiration.

"Tell me, I entreat of you, who and what you are?" said he at length; "never have I met with so remarkable a person as yourself."

"Willingly," answered the stranger; "if, indeed, you feel any curiosity respecting one, now, alas! powerless to aid you in any way."

"Say not so; you can console and support me by the strength of your own powerful mind. Pray let me know who you really are?"

and there are even moments when my mental vision transports me beyond these walls, and I fancy myself at liberty."

"But wherefore are you here?"

"Because in 1807 I meditated the very scheme Napoleon wished to realise in 1811; because, like Machiavel, I desired to alter the political face of Italy, and instead of allowing it to be split up into a quantity of petty principalities, each held by some weak or tyrannical ruler, I sought to form one large, compact, and powerful empire; and, lastly, because I fancied I had found my Cæsar Borgia in a crowned simpleton, who feigned to enter into my views only to betray me. It was projected equally by Alexander VI. and Clement VII., but it will never succeed now, for they attempted it fruitlessly, and Napoleon was unable to complete his work. Italy seems fated to be unlucky." The old man uttered these last words in a tone of deep dejection, and his head fell listlessly on his breast.

To Dantès all this was perfectly incomprehensible. In the first place, he could not understand a man risking his life and liberty for such unimportant matters as the division of a kingdom; then, again, the persons referred to were wholly unknown to him. Napoleon certainly he knew something of, inasmuch as he had seen and spoken with him; but the other individuals alluded to were strangers to him even by name.

"Pray excuse my question," said Dantès, beginning to partake of the gaoler's opinion touching the state of the abbé's brain, "but are you not the priest who is considered throughout the Château d'If—to-be-ill?"

"Mad, you mean, don't you?"

"I did not like to say so," answered Dantès smiling.

"Well, then," resumed Faria, with a bitter smile, "let me answer your question in full, by acknowledging that I am the poor mad prisoner of the Château d'If, for many years permitted to amuse the different visitants to the prison with what is said to be my insanity; and, in all probability, I should be promoted to the honour of making sport for the children, if such innocent beings could be found in an abode devoted like this to suffering and despair."

Dantès remained for a short time mute and motionless; at length he said,—*"Then you abandon all hope of flight?"*

"I perceive its utter impossibility; and I consider it impious to attempt that which the Almighty evidently does not approve."

"Nay, be not discouraged. Would it not be expecting too much to hope to succeed at your first attempt? Why not try to find an opening in another direction to that which had so unfortunately failed?"

"Alas! it shows how little notion you can have of all it has cost me to effect a purpose so unexpectedly frustrated, that you talk of beginning over again. In the first place, I was four years making the tools I possess, and have been two years scraping and digging out earth, hard as granite itself; then what toil and fatigue has it not been to remove huge stones I should once have deemed impossible to loosen. Whole days have I passed in these Titanic efforts, considering my labour well repaid if by night-time I had contrived to carry away a square inch of this hard-bound cement, changed by ages into a substance unyielding as the stones themselves; then to conceal the mass of earth and rubbish I dug up, I was compelled to break through a staircase, and throw the fruits of my labour into the hollow part of it; but the well is now so completely choked up, that I scarcely think it would be possible to add another handful of dust without leading to a discovery. Consider also that I fully believed I had accomplished the end and aim of my undertaking, for which I had so exactly

husbanded my strength as to make it just hold out to the termination of my enterprise ; and just at the moment when I reckoned upon success, my hopes are for ever dashed from me. No, I repeat again, that nothing shall induce me to renew attempts evidently at variance with the Almighty's pleasure."

Dantès held down his head, that his companion might not perceive how little of real regret at the failure of the scheme was expressed on his countenance ; but in truth, the young man could entertain no other feeling than delight at finding his prison would be no longer solitary or uncheered by human participation.

The abbé sunk upon Edmond's bed, while Edmond himself remained standing, lost in a train of deep meditation. Flight had never once occurred to him. There are, indeed, some things which appear so morally impossible that the mind does not dwell on them for an instant. To undermine the ground for fifty feet—to devote three years to a labour which, if successful, would conduct you to a precipice overhanging the sea—to plunge into the waves at a height of fifty or sixty feet, at the risk of being dashed to pieces against the rocks, should you have been fortunate enough to have escaped the balls from the sentinel's musket ; and even, supposing all these perils past, then to have to swim for your life a distance of at least three miles ere you could reach the shore—were difficulties so startling and formidable that Dantès had never even dreamed of such a scheme, but resigned himself to his fate. But the sight of an old man clinging to life with so desperate a courage, gave a fresh turn to his ideas, and inspired him with new courage and energy. An instance was before him of one less adroit, as well as weaker and older, having devised a plan which nothing but an unfortunate mistake in geometrical calculation could have rendered abortive. This same individual, with almost incredible patience and perseverance, had contrived to provide himself with tools requisite for so unparalleled an attempt. If, then, one man had already conquered the

we shall get out into the gallery you have described ; kill the sentinel who guards it, and make our escape. All we require to insure success is courage, and that you possess, and strength, which I am not deficient in ; as for patience, you have abundantly proved yours—you shall now see me prove mine."

"One instant, my dear friend," replied the abbé ; "it is clear you do not understand the nature of the courage with which I am endowed, and what use I intend making of my strength. As for patience, I consider I have abundantly exercised that on recommencing every morning the task of the overnight, and every night beginning again the task of the day. But then, young man (and I pray of you to give me your full attention), then I thought I could not be doing anything displeasing to the Almighty in trying to set an innocent being at liberty,—one who had committed no offence, and merited not condemnation."

"And have your notions changed ?" asked Dantès with much surprise ; "do you think yourself more guilty in making the attempt since you have encountered me ?"

"No ; neither do I wish to incur guilt. Hitherto I have fancied myself merely waging war against circumstances, not men. I have thought it no sin to bore through a wall, or destroy a staircase ; but I cannot so easily persuade myself to pierce a heart or take away a life." A slight movement of surprise escaped Dantès.

"Is it possible," said he, "that where your liberty is at stake you can allow any such scruple to deter you from obtaining it ?"

"Tell me," replied Faria, "what has hindered you from knocking down your gaoler with a piece of wood torn from your bedstead, dressing yourself in his clothes, and endeavouring to escape ?"

"Simply that I never thought of such a scheme," answered Dantès.

"Because," said the old man, "the natural repugnance to the commission of such a crime prevented its bare idea from occurring to you ; and so it ever is with all simple and allowable things. Our natural instincts keep us from deviating from the strict line of duty. The tiger, whose nature teaches him to delight in shedding blood, needs but the organ of smelling to know when his prey is within his reach ; and by following this instinct he is enabled to measure the leap necessary to enable him to spring on his victim ; but man, on the contrary, loathes the idea of blood ;—it is not alone that the laws of social life inspire him with a shrinking dread of taking life ; his natural construction and physiological formation—"

Dantès remained confused and silent by this explanation of the thoughts which had unconsciously been working in his mind, or rather soul ; for there are two distinct sorts of ideas, those that proceed from the head and those that emanate from the heart.

"Since my imprisonment," said Faria, "I have thought over all the most celebrated cases of escape recorded. Among the many that have failed in obtaining the ultimate release of the prisoner, I consider there has been a precipitation—a haste wholly incompatible with such undertakings. Those escapes that have been crowned with full success have been long meditated upon, and carefully arranged ; such, for instance, as the escape of the duke de Beaufort from the Château de Vincennes, that of the Abbé Dubuquoi from For l'Evêque ; Latude's from the Bastille, with similar cases of successful evasion ; and I have come to the conclusion, that chance frequently affords opportunities we should never ourselves have thought of. Let us, therefore, wait patiently for some

favourable moment ; rely upon it, you will not find me more backward than yourself in seizing it."

"Ah !" said Dantès, "you might well endure the tedious delay ; you were constantly employed in the task you set yourself, and when weary with toil, you had your hopes to refresh and encourage you."

"I assure you," replied the old man, "I did not turn to that source for recreation or support."

"What did you do then ?"—"I wrote or studied."

"Were you then permitted the use of pens, ink, and paper ?"

"Oh, no !" answered the abbé ; "I had none but what I made for myself."

"Do you mean to tell me," exclaimed Dantès, "that you could invent all those things—for real ones you could not procure unaided ?"

"I do, indeed, truly say so."

Dantès gazed with kindling eyes and rapidly increasing admiration on the wonderful being whose hand seemed gifted with the power of a magician's wand ; some doubt, however, still lingered in his mind, which was quickly perceived by the penetrating eye of the abbé.

"When you pay me a visit in my cell, my young friend," said he, "I will show you an entire work, the fruits of the thoughts and reflections of my whole life ; many of them meditated over in the ruins of the Coliseum of Rome, at the foot of St. Mark's column at Venice, and on the borders of the Arno at Florence, little imagining at the time that they would be arranged in order within the walls of the Château d'If. The work I speak of is called '*A Treatise on the Practicability of forming Italy into one General Monarchy*,' and will make one large quarto volume."

"And on what have you written all this ?"

"On two of my shirts. I invented a preparation that makes linen as smooth and as easy to write off as parchment."

thousand in the dictionaries. I cannot hope to be very fluent, but I certainly should have no difficulty in explaining my wants and wishes ; and that would be quite as much as I should ever require."

Stronger grew the wonder of Dantès, who almost fancied he had to do with one gifted with supernatural powers ; still hoping to find some imperfection which might bring him down to a level with human beings, he added, "Then if you were not furnished with pens, how did you manage to write the work you speak of?"

"I made myself some excellent ones, which would be universally preferred to all others if once known. You are aware what huge whittings are served to us on *maigre* days. Well, I selected the cartilages of the heads of these fishes, and you can scarcely imagine the delight with which I welcomed the arrival of each Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, as affording me the means of increasing my stock of pens ; for I will freely confess that my historical labours have been my greatest solace and relief. While retracing the past, I forget the present ; and while following the free and independent course of historical record, I cease to remember that I am myself immured within the gloomy walls of a dungeon."

"But the ink requisite for copying down your ideas," said Dantès ; "how have you procured that?"

"I will tell you," replied Faria. "There was formerly a fireplace in my dungeon, but closed up long ere I became an occupant of this prison. Still, it must have been many years in use, for it was thickly covered with a coating of soot : this soot I dissolved in a portion of the wine brought to me every Sunday, and I assure you a better ink cannot be desired. For very important notes, for which closer attention is required, I have pricked one of my fingers, and written the facts claiming notice in blood."

"And when," asked Dantès, "will you show me all this?"

"Whenever you please," replied the abbé.

"Oh, then let it be directly!" exclaimed the young man.

"Follow me, then," said the abbé, as he re-entered the subterranean passage, in which he soon disappeared, followed by Dantès.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ABBÉ'S CHAMBER.

AFTER having passed with tolerable ease through the subterranean passage, which, however, did not admit of their holding themselves erect, the two friends reached the further end of the corridor, into which the cell of the abbé opened ; from that point the opening became much narrower, barely permitting an individual to creep through on his hands and knees. The floor of the abbé's cell was paved, and it had been by raising one of the stones in the most obscure corner that Faria had been able to commence the laborious task of which Dantès had witnessed the completion.

As he entered the chamber of his friend, Dantès cast around one eager and searching glance in quest of the expected marvels, but nothing more than common met his view.

"It is well," said the abbé ; "we have some hours before us—it is now just a quarter past twelve o'clock." Instinctively Dantès turned round to observe by what watch or clock the abbé had been able so accurately to observe the hour.

"Look at this ray of light which enters by my window," said the abbé, "and then observe the lines traced on the wall. Well, by means of these lines, which are in accordance with the double motion of the earth, as well as the ellipses it describes round the sun, I am enabled to ascertain the precise hour with more minuteness than if I possessed a watch; for that might be broken or deranged in its movements, while the sun and earth never vary in their appointed paths."

This last explanation was wholly lost upon Dantès, who had always imagined, from seeing the sun rise from behind the mountains and set in the Mediterranean, that it moved, and not the earth. A double movement in the globe he inhabited, and of which he could feel nothing, appeared to him perfectly impossible; still, though unable to comprehend the full meaning of his companion's allusions, each word that fell from his lips seemed fraught with the wonders of science, as admirably deserving of being brought fully to light as were the glittering treasures he could just recollect having visited during his earliest youth in a voyage he made to Guzerat and Golconda.

"Come," said he to the abbé, "show me the wonderful inventions you told me of—I am all impatience to behold them."

The abbé smiled, and, proceeding to the disused fireplace, raised, by the help of his chisel, a long stone, which had doubtless been the hearth, beneath which was a cavity of considerable depth, serving as a safe depository of the articles mentioned to Dantès.

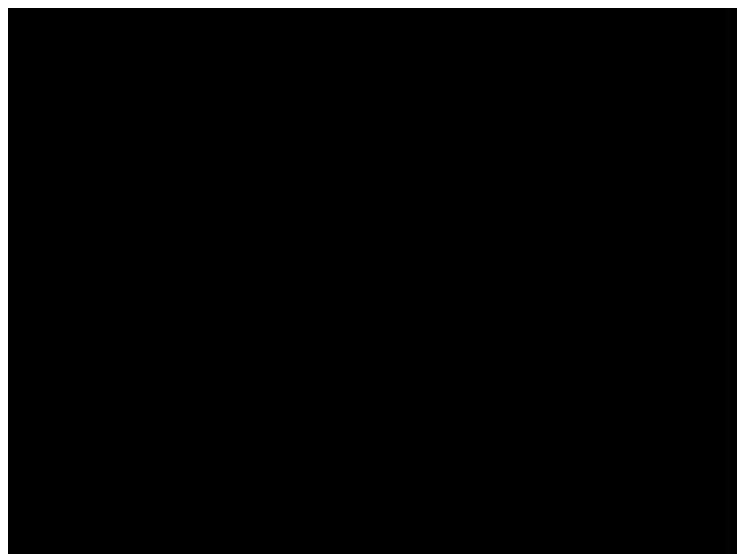
"What do you wish to see first?" asked the abbé.

"Oh! your great work on the monarchy of Italy!"

Faria then drew forth from his hiding-place three or four rolls of linen, laid one over the other, like the folds of papyrus found in mummy-cases. These rolls consisted of slips of cloth about four inches wide and eighteen



DANTES PERUSING THE ABBÉ'S WORK.



shops at Marseilles as the works of the savages in the South Seas, from whence they had been brought by the different trading vessels.

"As for the ink," said Faria, "I told you how I managed to obtain that—and I only just make it from time to time, as I require it."

"There is one thing puzzles me still," observed Dantès, "and that is how you managed to do all this by daylight?"

"I worked at night also," replied Faria.

"Night!—why, for Heaven's sake, are your eyes like cats', that you can see to work in the dark?"

"Indeed they are not; but a beneficent Creator has supplied man with intelligence and ability to supply the want of the power you allude to. I furnished myself with a light quite as good as that possessed by the cat."

"You did? Pray tell me how."

"I separated the fat from the meat served to me, melted it, and made a most capital oil—here is my lamp." So saying, the abbé exhibited a sort of vessel very similar to those employed upon the occasion of public illuminations.

"But how do you procure a light?"

"Oh, here are two flints and a morsel of burnt linen."

"And your matches?"

"Were easily prepared. I feigned a disorder of the skin, and asked for a little sulphur, which was readily supplied." Dantès laid the different things he had been looking at gently on the table, and stood with his head drooping on his breast, as though overwhelmed by the persevering spirit and strength of character developed in each fresh trait of his new-found friend's conduct.

"You have not seen all yet," continued Faria, "for I did not think it wise to trust all my treasures in the same hiding-place. Let us shut this one up, and then you shall see what else I have to display." Dantès helped him to replace the stone as they first found it; the abbé sprinkled a little dust over it to conceal the traces of its having been removed, rubbed his foot well on it to make it assume the same appearance as the other, and then, going towards his bed, he removed it from the spot it stood in. Behind the head of the bed, and concealed by a stone fitting in so closely as to defy all suspicion, was a hollow space, and in this space a ladder of cords, between twenty-five and thirty feet in length. Dantès closely and eagerly examined it: he found it firm, solid, and compact enough to bear any weight.

"Who supplied you with the materials for making this wonderful work?" asked Dantès.

"No one but myself. I tore up several of my shirts, and unravelled the sheets of my bed, during my three years' imprisonment at Fenestrelle; and when I was removed to the Château d'If, I managed to bring the ravellings with me, so that I have been able to finish my work here."

"And was it not discovered that your sheets were unhemmed?"

"Oh, no! for when I had taken out the thread I required, I hemmed the edges over again."—"With what?"

"With this needle!" said the abbé, as, opening his ragged vestments he showed Dantès a long, sharp fish-bone, with a small perforated eye for the thread, a small portion of which still remained in it. "I once thought," continued Faria, "of removing these iron bars, and letting myself down from the window, which, as you see, is somewhat wider than yours, although I should have enlarged it still more preparatory to my flight; however, I discovered that I should merely have dropped into a sort of

inner court, and I therefore renounced the project altogether as too full of risk and danger. Nevertheless, I carefully preserved my ladder against one of those unforeseen opportunities of which I spoke just now, and which sudden chance frequently brings about." While affecting to be deeply engaged in examining the ladder, the mind of Dantès was, in fact, busily occupied by the idea that a person so intelligent, ingenious, and clear-sighted as the abbé, might probably be enabled to dive into the dark recesses of his own misfortunes, and cause that light to shine upon the mystery connected with them he had in vain sought to elicit.

"What are you thinking of?" asked the abbé smilingly, imputing the deep abstraction in which his visitor was plunged to the excess of his awe and wonder.

"I was reflecting, in the first place," replied Dantès, "upon the enormous degree of intelligence and ability you must have employed to reach the high perfection to which you have attained. If you thus surpass all mankind while but a prisoner, what would you not have accomplished free?"

"Possibly nothing at all; the overflow of my brain would probably, in a state of freedom, have evaporated in a thousand follies; it needs trouble and difficulty and danger to hollow out various mysterious and hidden mines of human intelligence. Pressure is required, you know, to ignite powder: captivity has collected into one single focus all the floating faculties of my mind; they have come into close contact in the narrow space in which they have been wedged; and you are well aware that from the collision of clouds electricity is produced—from electricity comes the lightning, from whose flash we have light amid our greatest darkness."

"Alas, no!" replied Dantès. "I know not that these things follow in such natural order. Oh, I am very ignorant! and you must be blessed indeed to possess the knowledge you have."

cédès, and their nuptial fête—his arrest and subsequent examination in the temporary prison of the Palais de Justice, ending in his final imprisonment in the Château d'If. From the period of his arrival all was a blank to Dantès—he knew nothing, not even the length of time he had been imprisoned. His recital finished, the abbé reflected long and earnestly.

"There is," said he, at the end of his meditations, "a clever maxim, which bears upon what I was saying to you some little while ago, and that is, that unless wicked ideas take root in a naturally depraved mind, human nature, in a right and wholesome state, revolts at crime. Still, from an artificial civilization have originated wants, vices, and false tastes, which occasionally become so powerful as to stifle within us all good feelings, and ultimately to lead us into guilt and wickedness. From this view of things, then, comes the axiom I allude to—that if you wish to discover the author of any bad action, seek first to discover the person to whom the perpetration of that bad action could be in any way advantageous. Now, to apply it in your case :—to whom could your disappearance have been serviceable?"

"To no breathing soul. Why, who could have cared about the removal of so insignificant a person as myself?"

"Do not speak thus, for your reply evinces neither logic nor philosophy; everything is relative, my dear young friend, from the king who obstructs his successor's immediate possession of the throne, to the occupant of a place for which the supernumerary to whom it has been promised ardently longs. Now, in the event of the king's death, his successor inherits a crown;—when the placeman dies, the supernumerary steps into his shoes, and receives his salary of twelve thousand livres. Well, these twelve thousand livres are his civil list, and are as essential to him as the twelve millions of a king. Every individual, from the highest to the lowest degree, has his place in the ladder of social life, and around him are grouped a little world of interests, composed of stormy passions and conflicting atoms; but let us return to your world. You say you were on the point of being appointed captain of the *Pharaon*?"—"I was."

"And about to become the husband of a young and lovely girl?"—"True."

"Now, could any one have had any interest in preventing the accomplishment of these two circumstances? But let us first settle the question as to its being the interest of any one to hinder you from being captain of the *Pharaon*. What say you?"

"I cannot believe such was the case. I was generally liked on board; and had the sailors possessed the right of selecting a captain themselves, I feel convinced their choice would have fallen on me. There was only one person among the crew who had any feeling of ill-will towards me. I had quarrelled with him some time previously, and had even challenged him to fight me; but he refused."

"Now we are getting on. And what was this man's name?"—"Danglars."

"What rank did he hold on board?"—"He was supercargo."

"And had you been captain, should you have retained him in his employment?"

"Not if the choice had remained with me, for I had frequently observed inaccuracies in his accounts."

"Good again! Now then, tell me, was any person present during your last conversation with Captain Leclerc?"—"No, we were quite alone."

"Could your conversation be overheard by any one?"

"It might, for the cabin door was open ;—and—stay ; now I recollect, —Danglars himself passed by just as Captain Leclere was giving me the packet for the grand maréchal."

"That will do," cried the abbé : "now we are on the right scent. Did you take anybody with you when you put into the port of Elba?"—"Nobody."

"Somebody there received your packet, and gave you a letter in place of it, I think?"—"Yes : the grand maréchal did."

"And what did you do with that letter?"—"Put it into my pocket-book."

"Ah ! indeed ! You had your pocket-book with you, then ? Now, how could a pocket-book, large enough to contain an official letter, find sufficient room in the pockets of a sailor ?"

"You are right : I had it not with me, —it was left on board."

"Then it was not till your return to the ship that you placed the letter in the pocket-book?"—"No."

"And what did you do with this same letter while returning from Porto-Ferrajo to your vessel ?"—"I carried it in my hand."

"So that when you went on board the *Pharaon*, everybody could perceive you held a letter in your hand ?"—"To be sure they could."

"Danglars, as well as the rest ?"—"Yes ; he as well as others."

"Now, listen to me, and try to recall every circumstance attending your arrest. Do you recollect the words in which the information against you was couched ?"

"Oh yes ! I read it over three times, and the words sank deeply into my memory."—"Repeat it to me."

Dantès paused a few instants, as though collecting his ideas, then said, "This is it, word for word : 'M. le Procureur du Roi is informed by a

"What is that?"—"That whereas all writing done with the right hand varies, that performed with the left hand is invariably similar."

"You have evidently seen and observed everything."

"Let us proceed."—"Oh! yes, yes! Let us go on."

"Now as regards the second question. Was there any person whose interest it was to prevent your marriage with Mercédès?"

"Yes, a young man who loved her."—"And his name was——"

"Fernand."

"That is a Spanish name, I think?"—"He was a Catalan."

"You imagine him capable of writing the letter?"

"Oh, no! he would more likely have got rid of me by sticking a knife into me."

"That is in strict accordance with the Spanish character; an assassination they will unhesitatingly commit, but an act of cowardice, never."

"Besides," said Dantès, "the various circumstances mentioned in the letter were wholly unknown to him."

"You had never spoken of them yourself to any one?"

"To no person whatever."

"Not even to your mistress?"—"No, not even to my betrothed bride."

"Then it is Danglars, beyond a doubt."—"I feel quite sure of it now."

"Wait a little. Pray was Danglars acquainted with Fernand?"

"No—yes, he was. Now I recollect——"

"What?"—"To have seen them both sitting at table together beneath an arbour at Père Pamphile the evening before the day fixed for my wedding. They were in earnest conversation. Danglars was joking in a friendly way, but Fernand looked pale and agitated."

"Were they alone?"—"There was a third person with them whom I knew perfectly well, and who had, in all probability, made their acquaintance; he was a tailor named Caderousse, but he was quite intoxicated. Stay!—stay!—How strange that it should not have occurred to me before! Now I remember quite well, that on the table round which they were sitting were pens, ink, and paper. Oh! the heartless treacherous scoundrels!" exclaimed Dantès, pressing his hand to his throbbing brows.

"Is there anything else I can assist you in discovering, besides the villany of your friends?" inquired the abbé.

"Yes, yes," replied Dantès, eagerly; "I would beg of you, who see so completely to the depths of things, and to whom the greatest mystery seems but an easy riddle, to explain to me how it was that I underwent no second examination, was never brought to trial, and above all, my being condemned without ever having had sentence passed on me?"

"That is altogether a different and more serious matter," responded the abbé. "The ways of justice are frequently too dark and mysterious to be easily penetrated. All we have hitherto done in the matter has been child's play. If you wish me to enter upon the more difficult part of the business, you must assist me by the most minute information on every point."

"That I will gladly. So pray begin, my dear abbé, and ask me whatever questions you please; for, in good truth, you seem to turn over the pages of my past life far better than I could do myself."

"In the first place, then, who examined you,—the procureur du roi, his deputy, or a magistrate?"—"The deputy."

"Was he young or old?"—"About six or seven-and-twenty years of age, I should say."

"To be sure," answered the abbé. "Old enough to be ambitious, but not sufficiently so to have hardened his heart. And how did he treat you?"

"With more of mildness than severity."

"Did you tell him your whole story?"—"I did."

"And did his conduct change at all in the course of your examination?"

"Yes; certainly he did appear much disturbed when he read the letter that had brought me into this scrape. He seemed quite overcome at the thoughts of the danger I was in."

"You were in?"—"Yes; for whom else could he have felt any apprehensions?"

"Then you feel quite convinced he sincerely pitied your misfortune?"

"Why, he gave me one great proof of his sympathy, at least."

"And what was that?"

"He burnt the sole proof that could at all have criminated me."

"Do you mean the letter of accusation?"

"Oh, no! the letter I was entrusted to convey to Paris."

"Are you sure he burnt it?"—"He did so before my eyes."

"Ay, indeed! that alters the case, and leads to the conclusion that this man might, after all, be a greater scoundrel than I at first believed."

"Upon my word," said Dantès, "you make me shudder. If I listen much longer to you, I shall believe the world is filled with tigers and crocodiles."

"Only remember that two-legged tigers and crocodiles are more dangerous than those that walk on four."

"Never mind, let us go on."

"With all my heart! You tell me he burnt the letter in your presence?"

"He did; saying at the same time, 'You see I thus destroy the only proof existing against you.'"

"This action is somewhat too sublime to be natural."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it. To whom was this letter addressed?"

"Indeed, I cannot!"

"No other than the father of your sympathetic deputy-procureur."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Dantès, or hell opened its yawning gulf before him, he could not have been more completely transfixed with horror than at the sound of words so wholly unexpected, revealing as they did the fiendish perfidy which had consigned him to wear out his days in the dark cell of a prison that was to him as a living grave. Starting up, he clasped his hands around his head as though to prevent his very brain from bursting, as in a choked and almost inarticulate voice he exclaimed, "His father! oh, no! not his father, surely!"

"His own father, I assure you," replied the abbé; "his right name was Noirtier de Villefort!" At this instant a bright light shot through the mind of Dantès, and cleared up all that had been dark and obscure before. The change that had come over Villefort during the examination; the destruction of the letter, the exacted promise, the almost supplicating tones of the magistrate, who seemed rather to implore mercy than denounce punishment,—all returned with a stunning force to his memory. A cry of mental agony escaped his lips, and he staggered against the wall almost like a drunken man; then, as the paroxysm passed away, he hurried to the opening conducting from the abbé's cell to his own, and said,—*"I must be alone, to think over all this."*

When he regained his dungeon, he threw himself on his bed, where the turnkey found him at his evening visit, sitting, with fixed gaze and contracted features, still and motionless as a statue; but, during hours of deep meditation, which to him had seemed but as minutes, he had formed a fearful resolution, and bound himself to its fulfilment by a solemn oath. Dantès was at length roused from his reverie by the voice of Faria, who, having also been visited by his gaoler, had come to invite his fellow-sufferer to share his supper. The reputation of being out of his mind, though harmlessly and even amusingly so, had procured for the abbé greater privileges than were allowed to prisoners in general. He was supplied with bread of a finer, whiter description than the usual prison fare, and even regaled each Sunday with a small quantity of wine: the present day chanced to be Sunday, and the abbé came, delighted at having such luxuries to offer his new friend. Dantès followed him with a firm and assured step; his features had lost their almost spasmodic contraction, and now wore their usual expression; but there was that in his whole appearance that bespoke one who had come to a fixed and desperate resolve. Faria bent on him his penetrating eye: "I regret now," said he, "having helped you in your late inquiries, or having given you the information I did."

"Why so?" inquired Dantès.—"Because it has instilled a new passion in your heart—that of vengeance."

A bitter smile played over the features of the young man: "Let us talk of something else," said he.

Again the abbé looked at him, then mournfully shook his head; but in accordance with Dantès' request, he began to speak of other matters. The elder prisoner was one of those persons whose conversation, like that of all who have experienced many trials, contained many useful and important hints as well as sound information; but it was never egotistical, for the unfortunate man never alluded to his own sorrows. Dantès listened with admiring attention to all he said; some of his remarks corresponded with what he already knew, or applied to the sort of knowledge his nautical life had enabled him to acquire. A part of the good abbé's words, however,

were wholly incomprehensible to him ; but, like those auroræ boreales which serve to light the navigators in northern latitudes, they sufficed to open fresh views to the inquiring mind of the listener, and to give a glimpse of new horizons, illumined by the wild meteoric flash, enabling him justly to estimate the delight an intellectual mind would have in following the high and towering spirit of one so richly gifted as Faria in all the giddiest heights or lowest depths of science.

"You must teach me a small part of what you know," said Dantès, "if only to prevent your growing weary of me. I can well believe that so learned a person as yourself would prefer absolute solitude to being tormented with the company of one as ignorant and uninformed as myself. If you will only agree to my request, I promise you never to mention another word about escaping." The abbé smiled. "Alas ! my child," said he, "human knowledge is confined within very narrow limits ; and when I have taught you mathematics, physics, history, and the three or four modern languages with which I am acquainted, you will know as much as I do myself. Now, it will scarcely require two years for me to communicate to you the stock of learning I possess."

"Two years !" exclaimed Dantès ; "do you really believe I can acquire all these things in so short a time?"—"Not their application, certainly, but their principles you may ; to learn is not to know ; there are the learners and the learned. Memory makes the one, philosophy the other."

"But can I not learn philosophy as well as other things?"

"My son, philosophy, as I understand it, is reducible to no rules by which it can be learned ; it is the amalgamation of all the sciences, the golden cloud which bears the soul to heaven."

"Well, then," said Dantès, "leaving philosophy out of the question, tell me what you shall teach me first ? I feel my great need of scientific knowledge, and long to begin the work of improvement ; say, when shall we

once in the midst of these so often-repeated promenades, and exclaimed, "Ah, if there were no sentinel!"

"There shall not be one a minute longer than you please," said Dantès, who had followed the working of his thoughts as accurately as though his brain were inclosed in crystal so clear as to display its minutest operations.

"I have already told you," answered the abbé, "that I loathe the idea of shedding blood."

"Still, in our case, the death we should bestow would not be dictated by any wild or savage propensity, but as a necessary step to secure our own personal safety and preservation."

"No matter! I could never agree to it."

"Still, you have thought of it?"—"Incessantly, alas!" cried the abbé.

"And you have discovered a means of regaining our freedom, have you not?" asked Dantès eagerly.—"I have; if it were only possible to place a deaf and blind sentinel in the gallery beyond us."

"I will undertake to render him both," replied the young man, with an air of determined resolution that made his companion shudder.

"No, no!" cried the abbé; "I tell you the thing is impossible; name it no more!" In vain did Dantès endeavour to renew the subject; the abbé shook his head in token of disapproval, but refused any further conversation respecting it. Three months passed away.

"Do you feel yourself strong?" inquired the abbé of Dantès. The young man, in reply, took up the chisel, bent it into the form of a horse-shoe, and then as readily straightened it.

"And will you engage not to do any harm to the sentry, except as a last extremity?"

"I promise on my honour not to hurt a hair of his head, unless positively obliged for our mutual preservation."

"Then," said the abbé, "we may hope to put our design into execution."

—"And how long shall we be in accomplishing the necessary work?"

—"At least a year."

"And shall we begin at once?"—"Directly."

"We have lost a year to no purpose!" cried Dantès.

"Do you consider the last twelve months as wasted?" asked the abbé, in a tone of mild reproach.—"Forgive me!" cried Edmond, blushing deeply; "I am indeed ungrateful to have hinted such a thing."

"Tut, tut!" answered the abbé, "man is but man at last, and you are about the best specimen of the genus I have ever known. Come, let me show you my plan." The abbé then showed Dantès the sketch he had made for their escape. It consisted of a plan of his own cell and that of Dantès, with the corridor which united them. In this passage he proposed to form a tunnel, such as is employed in mines; this tunnel would conduct the two prisoners immediately beneath the gallery where the sentry kept watch; once there, a large excavation would be made, and one of the flag-stones with which the gallery was paved be so completely loosened that at the desired moment it would give way beneath the soldier's feet, who, falling into the excavation below, would be immediately bound and gagged, ere, stunned by the effects of his fall, he had power to offer any resistance. The prisoners were then to make their way through one of the gallery windows, and to let themselves down from the outer walls by means of the abbé's ladder of cords. The eyes of Dantès sparkled with joy, and he rubbed his hands with delight at the idea of a plan so simple, yet apparently so certain to succeed.

That very day the miners commenced their labour, and that with so

much more vigour and alacrity, as it succeeded to a long rest from fatigue and was destined, in all probability, to carry out the dearest wish of the heart of each. Nothing interrupted the progress of their work except the necessity of returning to their respective cells against the hour in which their gaoler was in the habit of visiting them ; they had learned to distinguish the almost imperceptible sound of his footsteps as he descended towards their dungeons, and, happily, never failed being prepared for his coming. The fresh earth excavated during their present work, and which would have entirely blocked up the old passage, was thrown, by degrees and with the utmost precaution, out of the window in either Faria's or Dantès' cell, the rubbish being first pulverised so finely that the night wind carried it far away without permitting the smallest trace to remain. More than a year had been consumed in this undertaking, the only tools for which had been a chisel, a knife, and a wooden lever ; Faria still continuing to instruct Dantès by conversing with him, sometimes in one language, sometimes in another ; at others, relating to him the history of nations and great men who from time to time have left behind them one of those bright tracks called glory.

The abbé was a man of the world, and had, moreover, mixed in the first society of the day ; his appearance was impressed with that air of melancholy dignity which Dantès, thanks to the imitative powers bestowed on him by nature, easily acquired, as well as that outward polish and politeness he had before been wanting in, and which is seldom possessed except by those who have been placed in constant intercourse with persons of high birth and breeding. At the end of fifteen months the tunnel was made, and the excavation completed beneath the gallery, and the two workmen could distinctly hear the measured tread of the sentinel as he paced to and fro over their heads.

Compelled, as they were, to await a night sufficiently dark to favour

into my cell as quickly as you can ; draw out one of the feet that support the bed ; you will find it has been hollowed out for the purpose of containing a small phial you will see there half-filled with a red-looking fluid. Bring it to me—or rather, no, no ! I may be found here ; therefore help me back to my room while I have any strength to drag myself along. Who knows what may happen, or how long the fit may last ?”

Spite of the magnitude of the misfortune which thus suddenly frustrated his hopes, Dantès lost not his presence of mind, but descended into the corridor, dragging his unfortunate companion with him ; then, half carrying, half supporting him, he managed to reach the abbé's chamber, when he immediately laid the sufferer on his bed.

“Thanks !” said the poor abbé, shivering as though his veins were filled with ice. “Now that I am safely here, let me explain to you the nature of my attack, and the appearance it will present. I am seized with a fit of catalepsy ; when it comes to its height, I may, probably, lie still and motionless as though dead, uttering neither sigh nor groan. On the other hand, the symptoms may be much more violent, and cause me to fall into fearful convulsions, cover my lips with foaming, and force from me the most piercing shrieks. This last evil you must carefully guard against, for, were my cries to be heard, it is more than probable I should be removed to another part of the prison, and we be separated for ever. When I become quite motionless, cold, and rigid as a corpse, then, and not before, you understand, force open my teeth with a chisel, pour from eight to ten drops of the liquor contained in the phial down my throat, and I may perhaps revive.”

“Perhaps !” exclaimed Dantès, in grief-stricken tones.

“Help ! help !” cried the abbé, “I—I—die—I——”

So sudden and violent was the fit, that the unfortunate prisoner was unable to complete the sentence begun ; a violent convulsion shook his whole frame, his eyes started from their sockets, his mouth was drawn on one side, his cheeks became purple, he struggled, foamed, dashed himself about, and uttered the most dreadful cries, which, however, Dantès prevented from being heard by covering his head with the blanket. The fit lasted two hours ; then, more helpless than an infant, and colder and paler than marble, more crushed and broken than a reed trampled under foot, he stretched himself out as though in the agonies of death, and became of the ghastly hue of the tomb.

Edmond waited till life seemed extinct in the body of his friend, then, taking up the chisel, he with difficulty forced open the closely-fixed jaws, carefully poured the appointed number of drops down the rigid throat, and anxiously awaited the result. An hour passed away without the old man's giving the least sign of returning animation. Dantès began to fear he had delayed too long ere he administered the remedy, and, thrusting his hands into his hair, continued gazing on the lifeless features of his friend in an agony of despair. At length a slight colour tinged the livid cheeks, consciousness returned to the dull, open eyeballs, a faint sigh issued from the lips, and the sufferer made a feeble effort to move.

“He is saved ! he is saved !” cried Dantès, in a paroxysm of delight.

The sick man was not yet able to speak, but he pointed with evident anxiety towards the door. Dantès listened, and plainly distinguished the approaching steps of the gaoler. It was therefore near seven o'clock ; but Edmond's anxiety had put all thoughts of time out of his head. The young man sprang to the entrance, darted through it, carefully drawing the stone over the opening, and hurried to his cell. He had scarcely done

so before the door opened, and disclosed to the gaoler's inquisitorial gaze the prisoner seated as usual on the side of his bed. Almost before the key had turned in the lock, and before the departing steps of the gaoler had died away in the long corridor he had to traverse, Dantès, whose restless anxiety concerning his friend left him no desire to touch the food brought him, hurried back to the abbé's chamber, and raising the stone by pressing his head against it, was soon beside the sick man's couch. Faria had now fully regained his consciousness, but he still lay helpless and exhausted on his miserable bed.

"I did not expect to see you again," said he, feebly, to Dantès.

"And why not?" asked the young man. "Did you fancy yourself dying?"

"No, I had no such idea; but, knowing that all was ready for your flight, I considered you had availed yourself of it, and were gone." The deep glow of indignation suffused the cheeks of Dantès.

"And did you really think so meanly of me," cried he, "as to believe I would depart without you?"—"At least," said the abbé, "I now see how wrong such an opinion would have been. Alas, alas! I am fearfully exhausted and debilitated by this attack."

"Be of good cheer," replied Dantès; "your strength will return." And as he spoke he seated himself on the bed beside Faria, and tenderly chafed his chilled hands. The abbé shook his head.

"The former of these fits," said he, "lasted but half an hour, at the termination of which I experienced no other feeling than a great sensation of hunger, and I rose from my bed without requiring the least help; now I can neither move my right arm nor leg, and my head seems uncomfortable, proving a rush of blood to the brain. The next of these fits will either carry me off or leave me paralysed for life."

"No, no!" cried Dantès; "you are mistaken—you will not die! And

your poor arm, what difference will that make in our escape. Never mind, if you cannot swim, I can take you on my shoulders, and swim for both of us."

"My son," said the abbé, "you, who are a sailor and a swimmer, must know as well as I do that a man so loaded would sink ere he had advanced fifty yards in the sea. Cease, then, to allow yourself to be duped by vain hopes, that even your own excellent heart refuses to believe in. Here I shall remain till the hour of my deliverance arrives; and that, in all human probability, will be the hour of my death. As for you, who are young and active, delay not on my account, but fly—go—I give you back your promise."

"It is well," said Dantès. "And now hear my determination also." Then, rising and extending his hand with an air of solemnity over the old man's head, he slowly added, "Here I swear to remain with you so long as life is spared to you, and that death only shall divide us."

Faria gazed fondly on his noble-minded but single-hearted young friend, and read in his honest, open countenance ample confirmation of truthfulness, as well as sincere, affectionate, and faithful devotion.

"Thanks, my child," murmured the invalid, extending the one hand of which he still retained the use. "Thanks for your generous offer, which I accept as frankly as it was made." Then, after a short pause, he added, "You may one of these days reap the reward of your disinterested devotion. But as I cannot, and you will not, quit this place, it becomes necessary to fill up the excavation beneath the soldier's gallery; he might, by chance, find out the hollow sound produced by his footsteps over the excavated ground, and call the attention of his officer to the circumstance. That would bring about a discovery which would inevitably lead to our being separated. Go, then, and set about this work, in which, unhappily, I can offer you no assistance; keep at it all night, if necessary, and do not return here to-morrow till after the gaoler has visited me. I shall have something of the greatest importance to communicate to you."

Dantès took the hand of the abbé in his, and affectionately pressed it. Faria smiled encouragingly on him, and the young man retired to his task, filled with a religious determination faithfully and unflinchingly to discharge the vow which bound him to his afflicted friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TREASURE.

WHEN Dantès returned next morning to the chamber of his companion in captivity, he found Faria seated and looking composed. In the ray of light which entered by the narrow window of his cell, he held open in his left hand, of which alone, it will be recollected, he retained the use, a morsel of paper, which, from being constantly rolled into a small compass, had the form of a cylinder, and was not easily kept open. He did not speak, but showed the paper to Dantès.

"What is that?" he inquired.—"Look at it," said the abbé, with a smile.

"I have looked at it with all possible attention," said Dantès, "and I only see a half-burnt paper, on which are traces of Gothic characters traced with a peculiar kind of ink."

"This paper, my friend," said Faria, "I may now avow to you, since I

have proved you—this paper is my treasure, of which, from this day forth, one half belongs to you."

A cold damp started to Dantès' brow. Until this day—and what a space of time!—he had avoided talking to the abbé of this treasure, the source whence accusation of madness against the poor abbé was derived. With his instinctive delicacy Edmond had preferred avoiding any touch on this painful chord, and Faria had been equally silent. He had taken the silence of the old man for a return to reason, and now these few words uttered by Faria, after so painful a crisis, seemed to announce a serious relapse of mental alienation.

"Your treasure?" stammered Dantès. Faria smiled.

"Yes," said he. "You are, indeed, a noble heart, Edmond, and I see by your paleness and your shudder what is passing in your heart at this moment. No, be assured, I am not mad. This treasure exists, Dantès; and if I have not been allowed to possess it, you will. Yes—you. No one would listen to me or believe me, because they thought me mad; but you, who must know that I am not, listen to me, and believe me afterwards if you will."

"Alas!" murmured Edmond to himself, "this is a terrible relapse! There was only this blow wanting." Then he said aloud, "My dear friend, your attack has, perhaps, fatigued you; had you not better repose awhile? To-morrow, if you will, I will hear your narrative; but to-day I wish to nurse you carefully. Besides," he said, "a treasure is not a thing we need hurry."

"On the contrary, it must be hurried, Edmond!" replied the old man. "Who knows if to-morrow, or the next day after, the third attack may not come on? and then must not all be finished? Yes, indeed, I have often thought with a bitter joy that these riches, which would make the wealth of a dozen families, will be for ever lost to those men who persecute

"Well!" said Faria, when the young man had finished reading it.

"Why," replied Dantès, "I see nothing but broken lines and unconnected words, which are rendered illegible by fire."

"Yes, to you, my friend, who read them for the first time; but not for me, who have grown pale over them by many nights' study, and have re-constructed every phrase, completed every thought."

"And do you believe you have discovered the concealed sense?"

"I am sure I have, and you shall judge for yourself; but first listen to the history of this paper."

"Silence!" exclaimed Dantès. "Steps approach—I go—adieu."

And Dantès, happy to escape the history and explanation which could not fail to confirm to him his friend's malady, glided like a snake along the narrow passage; whilst Faria, restored by his alarm to a kind of activity, pushed with his foot the stone into its place, and covered it with a mat in order the more effectually to avoid discovery.

It was the governor, who, hearing of Faria's accident from the gaoler, had come in person to see him.

Faria sat up to receive him, and continued to conceal from the governor the paralysis that had already half stricken him with death. His fear was lest the governor, touched with pity, might order him to be removed to a prison more wholesome, and thus separate him from his young companion. But fortunately this was not the case, and the governor left him, convinced that the poor madman, for whom in his heart he felt a kind of affection, was only affected with a slight indisposition.

During this time, Edmond, seated on his bed with his head in his hands, tried to collect his scattered thoughts. All was so rational, so grand, so logical, with Faria, since he had known him, that he could not understand how so much wisdom on all points could be allied to madness in any one. Was Faria deceived as to his treasure, or was all the world deceived as to Faria?

Dantès remained in his cell all day, not daring to return to his friend, thinking thus to defer the moment when he should acquire the certainty that the abbé was mad—such a conviction would be so terrible!

But, towards the evening after the usual visitation, Faria, not seeing the young man appear, tried to move, and get over the distance which separated them. Edmond shuddered when he heard the painful efforts which the old man made to drag himself along; his leg was inert, and he could no longer make use of one arm. Edmond was compelled to draw him towards himself, for otherwise he could not enter by the small aperture which led to Dantès' chamber.

"Here I am, pursuing you remorselessly," he said, with a benignant smile. "You thought to escape my munificence, but it is in vain. Listen to me."

Edmond saw there was no escape, and placing the old man on his bed, he seated himself on the stool beside him.

"You know," said the abbé, "that I was the secretary and intimate friend of Cardinal Spada, the last of the princes of that name. I owe to this worthy lord all the happiness I ever knew. He was not rich, although the wealth of his family had passed into a proverb, and I heard the phrase very often, 'As rich as a Spada.' But he, like public rumour, lived on this reputation for wealth; his palace was my paradise. I instructed his nephews, who are dead; and when he was alone in the world, I returned to him, by an absolute devotion to his will, all he had done for me during ten years. The house of the cardinal had no secrets for me. I had often

seen my noble patron annotating ancient volumes, and eagerly searching amongst dusty family manuscripts. One day when I was reproaching him for his unavailing searches, and the kind of prostration of mind that followed them, he looked at me, and, smiling bitterly, opened a volume relating to the History of the City of Rome. There, in the twenty-ninth chapter of the Life of Pope Alexander VI., were the following lines, which I can never forget :—

“The great wars of Romagna had ended ; Cæsar Borgia, who had completed his conquest, had need of money to purchase all Italy. The pope had also need of money to conclude with Louis, the twelfth king of France, formidable still in spite of his recent reverses ; and it was necessary, therefore, to have recourse to some profitable speculation, which was a matter of great difficulty in the impoverished condition of exhausted Italy. His holiness had an idea. He determined to make two cardinals.”

“By choosing two of the greatest personages of Rome, especially rich men—*this* was the return the holy father looked for from his speculation. In the first place, he had to sell the great appointments and splendid offices which the cardinals already held ; and then he had the two hats to sell besides. There was a third view in the speculation, which will appear hereafter. The pope and Cæsar Borgia first found the two future cardinals ; they were Jean Rospigliosi, who held four of the highest dignities of the holy seat ; and Cæsar Spada, one of the noblest and richest of the Roman nobility ; both felt the high honour of such a favour from the pope. They were ambitious ; and these found, Cæsar Borgia soon found purchasers for their appointments. The result was, that Rospigliosi and Spada paid for being cardinals, and eight other persons paid for the offices the cardinals held before their elevation, and thus eight hundred thousand crowns entered into the coffers of the speculators.

report. Rospigliosi, quite giddy with his dignity, prepared his stomach, and assumed his best looks. Spada, a prudent man, and greatly attached to his only nephew, a young captain of highest promise, took paper and pen, and made his will. He then sent to his nephew to await him in the vicinity of the vineyard : but it appeared the servant did not find him.

"Spada knew the nature of these invitations ; since Christianity, so eminently civilizing, had made progress in Rome, it was no longer a centurion who came from the tyrant with a message, 'Cæsar wills that you die,' but it was a legate *à latere*, who came with a smile on his lips to say from the pope, 'His holiness requests you will dine with him.'

"Spada set out about two o'clock to Saint-Pierre-ès-Liens. The pope awaited him. The first figure that struck the eyes of Spada was that of his nephew, in full costume, and Cæsar Borgia paying him most marked attentions. Spada turned pale, as Cæsar looked at him with an ironical air, which proved that he had anticipated all, and that the snare was well spread. They began dinner, and Spada was only able to inquire of his nephew if he had received his message. The nephew replied no ; perfectly comprehending the meaning of the question. It was too late, for he had already drunk a glass of excellent wine, placed for him expressly by the pope's butler. Spada at the same moment saw another bottle approach him, which he was pressed to taste. An hour afterwards a physician declared they were both poisoned through eating mushrooms. Spada died on the threshold of the vineyard ; the nephew expired at his own door, making signs which his wife could not comprehend.

"Then Cæsar and the pope hastened to lay hands on the heritage, under pretence of seeking for the papers of the dead man. But the inheritance consisted in this only, a scrap of paper on which Spada had written :—'I bequeath to my beloved nephew my coffers, my books, and, amongst other, my breviary and the gold corners, which I beg he will preserve in remembrance of his affectionate uncle.'

"The heirs sought everywhere, admired the breviary, laid hands on the furniture, and were greatly astonished that Spada, the rich man, was really the most miserable of uncles—no treasures—unless they were those of science, composed in the library and laboratories. This was all : Cæsar and his father searched, examined, scrutinized, but found nothing, or at least very little ; not exceeding a few thousand crowns in plate, and about the same in ready money ; but the nephew had time to say to his wife before he expired :—'Look well among my uncle's papers ; there is a will.'

"They sought even more thoroughly than the august heirs had done, but it was fruitless. There were two palaces and a vineyard behind the Palatine Hill ; but in these days landed property had not much value, and the two palaces and the vineyard remained to the family as beneath the rapacity of the pope and his son. Months and years rolled on. Alexander VI. died poisoned,—you know by what mistake. Cæsar, poisoned at the same time, escaped with colouring his skin like a snake, and assumed a new cuticle, on which the poison left spots, like those we see on the skin of a tiger ; then, compelled to quit Rome, he went and killed himself in obscurity in a night skirmish, scarcely noticed in history. After the pope's death and his son's exile, it was supposed the Spada family would again make the splendid figure they had before the cardinal's time ; but this was not the case. The Spadas remained in doubtful ease, a mystery hung over this dark affair, and the public rumour was, that Cæsar, a better politician than his father, had carried off from the pope the fortune

of the two cardinals. I say the two, because Cardinal Rospigliosi, who had not taken any precaution, was completely despoiled.

"Up to this time," said Faria, interrupting the thread of his narrative, "this seems to you very ridiculous, no doubt, eh?"

"Oh, my friend," cried Dantès, "on the contrary, it seems as if I were reading a most interesting narrative; go on, I pray of you."—"I will."

"The family began to feel accustomed to this obscurity. Years rolled on, and amongst the descendants some were soldiers, others diplomatists; some churchmen, some bankers; some grew rich, and some were ruined. I come now to the last of the family, whose secretary I was—the Comte de Spada. I had often heard him complain of the disproportion of his rank with his fortune; and I advised him to sink all he had in an annuity. He did so, and thus doubled his income. The celebrated breviary remained in the family, and was in the comte's possession. It had been handed down from father to son; for the singular clause of the only will that had been found, had rendered it a real *relique*, preserved in the family with superstitious veneration. It was an illuminated book, with beautiful Gothic characters, and so weighty with gold, that a servant always carried it before the cardinal on days of great solemnity.

"At the sight of papers of all sorts,—titles, contracts, parchments, which were kept in the archives of the family, all descending from the poisoned cardinal, I, like twenty servitors, stewards, secretaries before me, in my turn examined the immense bundles of documents; but in spite of the most accurate researches, I found—nothing. Yet I had read, I had even written a precise history of the Borgia family, for the sole purpose of assuring myself whether any increase of fortune had occurred to them on the death of the Cardinal Cæsar Spada; but could only trace the acquisition of the property of the Cardinal Rospigliosi, his companion in misfortune.

necessity of adopting. I took a wax-candle in one hand, and with the other groped about for a piece of paper (my match-box being empty), with which I proposed to produce a light from the small flame still playing on the embers. Fearing, however, to make use of any valuable piece of paper, I hesitated for a moment, then recollected that I had seen in the famous breviary, which was on the table beside me, an old paper quite yellow with age, and which had served as a marker for centuries, kept there by the request of the heirs. I felt for it, found it, twisted it up together, and putting it into the expiring flame, set light to it.

"But beneath my fingers, as if by magic, in proportion as the fire ascended, I saw yellowish characters appear on the paper. I grasped it in my hand, put out the flame as quickly as I could, lighted my taper in the fire itself, and opened the crumpled paper with inexpressible emotion, recognising, when I had done so, that these characters had been traced in mysterious and sympathetic ink, only appearing when exposed to the fire : nearly one-third of the paper had been consumed by the flame. It was that paper you read this morning ; read it again, Dantès, and then I will complete for you the incomplete words and unconnected sense."

Faria, with an air of triumph, offered the paper to Dantès, who this time read the following words, traced with an ink of a colour which most nearly resembled rust :

"This 25th day of April, 1498, be...
Alexander VI. and fearing that not...
he may desire to become my heir, and re...
and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned...
my sole heir, that I have bu...
and has visited with me, that is in...
island of Monte-Cristo all I poss...
jewels, diamonds, gems, that I alone...
may amount to nearly two mil...
will find on raising the twentieth ro...
creek to the east in a right line. Two open...
in these caves ; the treasure is in the furthest a...
which treasure I bequeath and leave en...
as my sole heir.

"25th April, 1498.

"CÆS...

"And now," said the abbé, "read this other paper ;" and he presented to Dantès a second leaf with fragments of lines written on it, which Edmond read as follows :

"...ing invited to dine by his Holiness
...content with making me pay for my hat
...serves for me the fate of Cardinals Caprara
...I declare to my nephew Guido Spada
...ried in a place he knows
...the caves of the small
...essed of ingots, gold, money
...know of the existence of this treasure, which
...lions of Roman crowns, and which he
...ek from the small
...ings have been made
...ngle in the second ;
...tire to him
...AR † SPADA."

Faria followed him with excited look.

"And now," he said, when he saw Dantès had read the last line, "put the two fragments together, and judge for yourself." Dantès obeyed, and the conjoined pieces gave the following:

"This 25th day of April, 1498, be...ing invited to dine by his Holiness Alexander VI., and fearing that not...content with making me pay for my hat, he may desire to become my heir, and re...serves for me the fate of Cardinals Caprara and Bentivoglio, who were poisoned,...I declare to my nephew, Guido Spada, my sole heir, that I have bu...ried in a place he knows and has visited with me,...that is, in...the caves of the small island of Monte-Cristo, all I poss...essed of ingots, gold, money, jewels, diamonds, gems; that I alone...know of the existence of this treasure, which may amount to nearly two mil...lions of Roman crowns, and which he will find on raising the twentieth ro...ck from the small creek to the east in a right line. Two open...ings have been made in these caves; the treasure is in the furthest a...ngle in the second; which treasure I bequeath and leave en...tire to him as my sole heir.

"25th April, 1498.

"CÆS...AR † SPADA."

"Well, do you comprehend now?" inquired Faria.

"It is the declaration of Cardinal Spada, and the will so long sought for," replied Edmond, still incredulous.

"Of course; what else could it be?"—"And who completed it as it now is?"

"I did. Aided by the remaining fragment, I guessed the rest; measuring the length of the lines by those of the paper, and divining the hidden meaning by means of what was in part revealed, as we are guided in a cavern by the small ray of light above us."

"And what did you do when you arrived at this conclusion?"

"I resolved to set out, and did set out that very instant, carrying with

this day Roman families perishing of hunger, though possessed of nearly a million in diamonds and jewels, handed down as heirlooms, and which they cannot touch." Edmond thought he was in a dream—he wavered between incredulity and joy.

"I have only kept this secret so long from you," continued Faria, "that I might prove you, and then surprise you. Had we escaped before my attack of catalepsy, I should have conducted you to Monte-Cristo; now," he added, with a sigh, "it is you who will conduct me thither. Well! Dantès, you do not thank me?"

"This treasure belongs to you, my dear friend," replied Dantès, "and to you only. I have no right to it. I am no relation of yours."

"You are my son, Dantès," exclaimed the old man. "You are the child of my captivity. My profession condemns me to celibacy. God has sent you to me to console, at one and the same time, the man who could not be a father and the prisoner who could not get free." And Faria extended the arm of which alone the use remained to him to the young man, who threw himself around his neck and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE THIRD ATTACK.

Now that this treasure, which had so long been the object of the abbé's meditations, could insure the future happiness of him whom Faria really loved as a son, it had doubled its value in his eyes, and every day he expatiated on the amount, explaining to Dantès all the good which, with thirteen or fourteen millions of francs, a man could do in these days to his friends; and then Dantès' countenance became gloomy, for the oath of vengeance he had taken recurred to his memory, and he reflected how much ill, in these times, a man with thirteen or fourteen millions could do to his enemies.

The abbé did not know the isle of Monte-Cristo; but Dantès knew it, and had often passed it, situated twenty-five miles from Pianosa, between Corsica and the isle of Elba, and had once touched at it. This island was, always had been, and still is, completely deserted. It is a rock of almost conical form, which seems as though produced by some volcanic effort from the depth to the surface of the ocean. Dantès traced a plan of the island to Faria, and Faria gave Dantès advice as to the means he should employ to recover the treasure. But Dantès was far from being as enthusiastic and confident as the old man. It was past a question now that Faria was not a lunatic, and the way in which he had achieved the discovery, which had given rise to the suspicion of his madness, increased his admiration of him; but at the same time he could not believe that that deposit, supposing it had ever existed, still existed; and though he considered the treasure as by no means chimerical, he yet believed it was no longer there.

However, as if fate resolved on depriving the prisoners of their last chance, and making them understand that they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, a new misfortune befell them: the gallery on the sea side, which had long been in ruins, was rebuilt. They had repaired it completely, and stopped up with vast masses of stone the hole Dantès had partly filled in. But for this precaution, which, it will be remembered, the abbé had made to Edmond, the misfortune would have been still greater, for their attempt to escape would have been detected, and they would un-

fortunately have been separated. Thus a fresh and even stronger door was closed upon them.

"You see," said the young man, with an air of sorrowful resignation, to Faria, "that God deems it right to take from me even what you call my devotion to you. I have promised to remain for ever with you, and now I could not break my promise if I would. I shall no more have the treasure than you, and neither of us will quit this prison. But my real treasure is not that, my dear friend, which awaits me beneath the sombre rocks of Monte-Cristo, but it is your presence, our living together five or six hours a day, in spite of our gaolers; it is those rays of intelligence you have elicited from my brain, the languages you have implanted in my memory, and which spring there with all their philological ramifications. These different sciences that you have made so easy to me by the depth of the knowledge you possess of them, and the clearness of the principles to which you have reduced them—this is my treasure, my beloved friend, and with this you have made me rich and happy. Believe me, and take comfort, this is better for me than tons of gold and cases of diamonds, even were they not as problematical as the clouds we see in the morning floating over the sea, which we take for *terra firma*, and which evaporate and vanish as we draw near to them. To have you as long as possible near me, to hear your eloquent voice, which I trust embellishes my mind, strengthens my soul, and makes my whole frame capable of great and terrible things, if I should ever be free, so fills my whole existence, that the despair to which I was just on the point of yielding when I knew you, has no longer any hold over me: and this—this is my fortune—not chimerical, but actual. I owe you my real good, my present happiness; and all the sovereigns of the earth, were they Cæsar Borgia's, could not deprive me of this."

light wandering in the night. All went on as if in existences in which misfortune has deranged nothing, and which glide on mechanically and tranquilly beneath the eye of Providence.

But beneath this superficial calm there were in the heart of the young man, and perhaps in that of the old man, many repressed desires, many stifled sighs, which found vent when Faria was left alone, and when Edmond returned to his cell. One night Edmond awoke suddenly, believing he heard some one calling him. He opened his eyes and tried to pierce through the gloom. His name, or rather a plaintive voice, which essayed to pronounce his name, reached him. "Alas !" murmured Edmond, "can it be ?"

He moved his bed, drew up the stone, rushed into the passage, and reached the opposite extremity ; the secret entrance was open. By the light of the wretched and wavering lamp, of which we have spoken, Dantès saw the old man, pale, but yet erect, clinging to the bedstead. His features were writhing with those horrible symptoms which he already knew, and which had so seriously alarmed him when he saw them for the first time.

"Alas ! my dear friend," said Faria in a resigned tone, "you understand, do you not ; and I need not attempt to explain to you ?"

Edmond uttered a cry of agony, and, quite out of his senses, rushed towards the door, exclaiming,—*"Help ! help !"*—Faria had just sufficient strength to retain him.

"Silence !" he said, "or you are lost. Think now of yourself ; only, my dear friend, act so as to render your captivity supportable or your flight possible. It would require years to renew only what I have done here, and which would be instantly destroyed if our gaolers knew we had communicated with each other. Besides, be assured, my dear Edmond, the dungeon I am about to leave will not long remain empty ; some other unfortunate being will soon take my place, and to him you will appear like an angel of salvation. Perhaps he will be young, strong and enduring, like yourself, and will aid you in your escape ; whilst I have been but a hindrance. You will no longer have half a dead body tied to you to paralyze all your movements. At length Providence has done something for you ; he restores to you more than he takes away, and it was time I should die." Edmond could only clasp his hands and exclaim,—*"Oh, my friend ! my friend ! speak not thus !"* and then resuming all his presence of mind, which had for a moment staggered under this blow, and his strength, which had failed at the words of the old man, he said,—*"Oh ! I have saved you once, and I will save you a second time !"* And raising the foot of the bed, he drew out the phial, still a third filled with the red liquor.

"See !" he exclaimed, "there remains still some of this saving draught. Quick, quick ! tell me what I must do this time,—are there any fresh instructions ? Speak, my friend, I listen."

"There is not a hope," replied Faria, shaking his head ; "but no matter, God will it that man whom he has created, and in whose heart He has so profoundly rooted the love of life, should do all in his power to preserve that existence, which, however painful it may be, is yet always so dear."

"Oh ! yes, yes !" exclaimed Dantès, "and I tell you you shall yet be saved !"

"Well, then, try. The cold gains upon me. I feel the blood flowing towards my brain. This horrible trembling, which makes my teeth chatter, and seems to dislocate my bones, begins to pervade my whole

frame ; in five minutes the malady will reach its height, and in a quarter of an hour there will be nothing left of me but a dead corpse."

"Oh !" exclaimed Dantès, his heart wrung with anguish.

"Do as you did before, only do not wait so long. All the springs of life are now exhausted in me, and death," he continued, looking at his paralyzed arm and leg, "has but half its work to do. If, after having made me swallow twelve drops instead of ten, you see that I do not recover, then pour the rest down my throat. Now lift me on my bed, for I can no longer support myself."

Edmond took the old man in his arms, and laid him on the bed.

"And now, my dear friend," said Faria, "sole consolation of my wretched existence,—you whom Heaven gave me somewhat late, but still gave me, a priceless gift, and for which I am most grateful, at the moment of separating from you for ever, I wish you all the happiness and all the prosperity you so well deserve. My son, I bless thee !" The young man cast himself on his knees, leaning his head against the old man's bed.

"Listen, now, to what I say in this my dying moment. The treasure of the Spadas exists. God grants me that there no longer exists for me distance or obstacle. I see it in the depths of the inner cavern. My eyes pierce the inmost recesses of the earth, and are dazzled at the sight of so much riches. If you do escape, remember that the poor abbé, whom all the world called mad, was not so. Hasten to Monte-Cristo—avail yourself of the fortune—for you have indeed suffered long enough." A violent shock interrupted the old man. Dantès raised his head and saw Faria's eyes injected with blood. It seemed as if a flow of blood had ascended from the chest to the head.

"Adieu ! adieu !" murmured the old man, clasping Edmond's hand convulsively—"adieu !"

"Oh, no—no, not yet," he cried : "do not forsake me ! Oh ! succour

he counted the seconds by the beatings of his heart. Then he thought it was time to make the last trial, and he put the phial to the violet lips of Faria, and without having occasion to force open his jaws, which had remained extended, he poured the whole of the liquid down his throat.

The draught produced a galvanic effect, a violent trembling pervaded the old man's limbs, his eyes opened until it was fearful to gaze upon them, he heaved a sigh which resembled a shriek, and then all this vibrating frame returned gradually to its state of immobility, only the eyes remained open.

Half an hour, an hour, an hour and a half elapsed, and during this time of anguish, Edmond leaned over his friend, his hand applied to his heart, and felt the body gradually grow cold, and the heart's pulsation become more and more deep and dull, until at length all stopped; the last movement of the heart ceased, the face became livid, the eyes remained open, but the look was glazed. It was six o'clock in the morning, the dawn was just breaking, and its weak ray came into the dungeon, and paled the ineffectual light of the lamp. Singular shadows passed over the countenance of the dead man, which at times gave it the appearance of life. Whilst this struggle between day and night lasted, Dantès still doubted; but as soon as the daylight gained the pre-eminence, he saw that he was alone with a corpse. Then an invincible and extreme terror seized upon him, and he dared not again press the hand that hung out of bed, he dared no longer to gaze on those fixed and vacant eyes which he tried many times to close, but in vain—they opened again as soon as shut. He extinguished the lamp, carefully concealed it, and then went away, closing as well as he could the entrance to the secret passage by the large stone as he descended.

It was time, for the gaoler was coming. On this occasion he began his rounds at Dantès' cell, and on leaving him he went on to Faria's dungeon, where he was taking breakfast and some linen. Nothing betokened that the man knew anything of what had occurred. He went on his way.

Dantès was then seized with an indescribable desire to know what was going on in the dungeon of his unfortunate friend. He therefore returned by the subterraneous gallery, and arrived in time to hear the exclamations of the turnkey, who called out for help. Other turnkeys came, and then was heard the regular tramp of soldiers even when not on duty—behind them came the governor.

Edmond heard the noise of the bed in which they were moving the corpse, heard the voice of the governor, who desired them to throw water on the face; and seeing that, in spite of this application, the prisoner did not recover, sent for the doctor. The governor then went out, and some words of pity fell on Dantès' listening ears, mingled with brutal laughter.

"Well! well!" said one, "the madman has gone to look after his treasure. Good journey to him!"

"With all his millions, he will not have enough to pay for his shroud!" said another.—"Oh!" added a third voice, "the shrouds of the Château d'If are not dear!"

"Perhaps," said one of the previous speakers, "as he was a churchman, they may go to some expense in his behalf."

"They may give him the honours of the sack."

Edmond did not lose a word, but comprehended very little of what was said. The voices soon ceased, and it seemed to him as if the persons had all left the cell. Still he dared not to enter, as they might have left some turnkey to watch the dead. He remained, therefore, mute and motion-

less, restraining even his respiration. At the end of an hour, he heard a faint noise, which increased. It was the governor who returned, followed by the doctor and other attendants. There was a moment's silence,—it was evident that the doctor was examining the dead body. The inquiries soon commenced.

The doctor analyzed the symptoms of the malady under which the prisoner had sunk, and declared he was dead. Questions and answers followed in a manner that made Dantès indignant, for he felt that all the world should experience for the poor abbé the love he bore him.

"I am very sorry for what you tell me," said the governor, replying to the assurance of the doctor, "that the old man is really dead ; for he was a quiet, inoffensive prisoner, happy in his folly, and required no watching."

"Ah !" added the turnkey, "there was no occasion for watching him ; he would have stayed here fifty years, I'll answer for it, without any attempt to escape."

"Still," said the governor, "I believe it will be requisite, notwithstanding your certainty, and not that I doubt your science, but for my own responsibility's sake, that we should be perfectly assured that the prisoner is dead." There was a moment of complete silence, during which Dantès, still listening, felt assured that the doctor was examining and touching the corpse a second time.

"You may make your mind easy," said the doctor ; "he is dead. I will answer for that."

"You know, sir," said the governor, persisting, "that we are not content in such cases as this with such a simple examination. In spite of all appearances, be so kind, therefore, as to finish your duty by fulfilling the formalities prescribed by law."

"Let the irons be heated," said the doctor ; "but really it is a useless precaution." This order to heat the irons made Dantès shudder. He

"Must we do this last formality in your presence, sir?" inquired a turnkey.

"Certainly. But make haste—I cannot stay here all day." Fresh footsteps, going and coming, were now heard, and a moment afterwards the noise of cloth being rubbed reached Dantès' ears, the bed creaked on its hinges, and the heavy foot of a man who lifts a weight resounded on the floor; then the bed again creaked under the weight deposited upon it.

"In the evening!" said the governor.

"Will there be any mass?" asked one of the attendants.

"That is impossible," replied the governor. "The chaplain of the château came to me yesterday to beg for leave of absence, in order to take a trip to Hyères for a week. I told him I would attend to the prisoners in his absence. If the poor abbé had not been in such a hurry, he might have had his requiem."

"Pooh! pooh!" said the doctor, with the accustomed impiety of persons of his profession, "he is a churchman. God will respect his profession, and not give the devil the wicked delight of sending him a priest." A shout of laughter followed this brutal jest. During this time the operation of putting the body in the sack was going on.

"This evening," said the governor, when the task was ended.

"At what o'clock?" inquired a turnkey.—"Why, about ten or eleven o'clock."

"Shall we watch by the corpse?"—"Of what use would it be? Shut the dungeon as if he were alive—that is all." Then the steps retreated, and the voices died away in the distance; the noise of the door, with its creaking hinges and bolts, ceased, and a silence duller than any solitude ensued—the silence of death, which pervaded all, and struck its icy chill through the young man's whole frame. Then he raised the flag-stone cautiously with his head, and looked carefully round the chamber. It was empty; and Dantès, quitting the passage, entered it.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CEMETERY OF THE CHATEAU D'IF.

ON the bed, at full length, and faintly lighted by the pale ray that penetrated the window, was visible a sack of coarse cloth, under the large folds of which were stretched a long and stiffened form; it was Faria's last winding-sheet—a winding-sheet which, as the turnkey said, cost so little. All, then, was completed. A material separation had taken place between Dantès and his old friend; he could no longer see those eyes which had remained open as if to look even beyond death; he could no longer clasp that hand of industry which had lifted for him the veil that had concealed hidden and obscure things. Faria, the usual and the good companion, with whom he was accustomed to live so intimately, no longer breathed. He seated himself on the edge of that terrible bed, and fell into a melancholy and gloomy reverie.

Alone!—he was alone again!—again relapsed into silence!—he found himself once again in the presence of nothingness! Alone!—no longer to see, no longer to hear the voice of the only human being who attached him to life! Was it not better, like Faria, to seek the presence of his Maker, and learn the enigma of life at the risk of passing through the mournful gate of intense suffering? The idea of suicide, driven away by

his friend, and forgotten in his presence whilst living, arose like a phantom before him in presence of his dead body.

"If I could die," he said, "I should go where he goes, and should assuredly find him again. But how to die? It is very easy," he continued, with a smile of bitterness; "I will remain here, rush on the first person that opens the door, will strangle him, and then they will guillotine me." But as it happens that in excessive griefs, as in great tempests, the abyss is found between the tops of the loftiest waves, Dantès recoiled from the idea of this infamous death, and passed suddenly from despair to an ardent desire for life and liberty.

"Die! oh no," he exclaimed—"not die now, after having lived and suffered so long and so much! Die! yes, had I died years since; but now it would be, indeed, to give way to my bitter destiny. No, I desire to live; I desire to struggle to the very last; I wish to reconquer the happiness of which I have been deprived. Before I die I must not forget that I have my executioners to punish, and perhaps too, who knows, some friends to reward. Yet they will forget me here, and I shall die in my dungeon like Faria." As he said this, he remained motionless, his eyes fixed like a man struck with a sudden idea, but whom this idea fills with amazement. Suddenly he rose, lifted his hand to his brow as if his brain were giddy, paced twice or thrice round his chamber, and then paused abruptly at the bed.

"Ah! ah!" he muttered, "who inspires me with this thought? Is that thou, gracious God? Since none but the dead pass freely from this dungeon, let me assume the place of the dead!" Without giving himself time to re-consider his decision, and, indeed, that he might not allow his thoughts to be distracted from his desperate resolution, he bent over the appalling sack, opened it with the knife which Faria had made, drew the corpse from

have worked his way through the soft soil and escape, hoping that the weight would not be too heavy for him to support. If he was deceived in this, and the earth proved too heavy, he would be stifled, and then, so much the better, all would be over. Dantès had not eaten since the previous evening, but he had not thought of hunger or thirst, nor did he now think of it. His position was too precarious to allow him even time to reflect on any thought but one.

The first risk that Dantès ran was, that the gaoler, when he brought him his supper at seven o'clock, might perceive the substitution he had effected; fortunately, twenty times at least, from misanthropy or fatigue, Dantès had received his gaoler in bed, and then the man placed his bread and soup on the table, and went away without saying a word. This time the gaoler might not be silent as usual, but speak to Dantès, and seeing that he received no reply, go to the bed, and thus discover all.

When seven o'clock came, Dantès' agony really commenced. His hand placed upon his heart was unable to repress its throbbings, whilst, with the other, he wiped the perspiration from his temples. From time to time shudderings ran through his whole frame, and collapsed his heart as if it were frozen. Then he thought he was going to die. Yet the hours passed on without any stir in the château, and Dantès felt he had escaped this first danger: it was a good augury. At length, about the hour the governor had appointed, footsteps were heard on the stairs. Edmond felt that the moment had arrived, and summoning up all his courage, held his breath, happy if at the same time he could have repressed in like manner the hasty pulsation of his arteries. They stopped at the door—there were two steps, and Dantès guessed it was the two grave-diggers who came to seek him—this idea was soon converted into certainty, when he heard the noise they made in putting down the hand-bier. The door opened, and a dim light reached Dantès' eyes through the coarse sack that covered him; he saw two shadows approach his bed, a third remaining at the door with a torch in his hand. Each of these two men, approaching the ends of the bed, took the sack by its extremities.

"He's heavy though for an old and thin man," said one, as he raised the head.

"They say every year adds half a pound to the weight of the bones," said another, lifting the feet.

"Have you tied the knot?" inquired the first speaker.

"What would be the use of carrying so much more weight?" was the reply; "I can do that when we get there."

"Yes, you're right," replied the companion.

"What's the knot for?" thought Dantès.

They deposited the supposed corpse on the bier. Edmond stiffened himself in order to play his part of a dead man, and then the party, lighted by the man with the torch, who went first, ascended the stairs. Suddenly he felt the fresh and sharp night air, and Dantès recognised the *Mistral*. It was a sudden sensation, at the same time replete with delight and agony. The bearers advanced twenty paces, then stopped, putting their bier down on the ground. One of them went away, and Dantès heard his shoes on the pavement.

"Where am I then?" he asked himself.

"Really, he is by no means a light load!" said the other bearer, sitting on the edge of the hand-barrow. Dantès' first impulse was to escape, but fortunately he did not attempt it.

"Light me, you sir," said the other bearer, "or I shall not find what I

am looking for." The man with the torch complied, although not asked in the most polite terms.

"What can he be looking for?" thought Edmond. "The spade, perhaps." An exclamation of satisfaction indicated that the grave-digger had found the object of his search. "Here it is at last," he said, "not without some trouble though."

"Yes," was the answer, "but it has lost nothing by waiting."

As he said this, the man came towards Edmond, who heard a heavy and sounding substance laid down beside him, and at the same moment a cord was fastened round his feet with sudden and painful violence.

"Well, have you tied the knot?" inquired the grave-digger, who was looking on. "Yes, and pretty tight too, I can tell you," was the answer.

"Move on, then." And the bier was lifted once more, and they proceeded.

They advanced fifty paces farther, and then stopped to open a door, then went forward again. The noise of the waves dashing against the rocks on which the *château* is built, reached Dantès' ear distinctly as they progressed.

"Bad weather!" observed one of the bearers; "not a pleasant night for a dip in the sea."

"Why, yes, the *abbé* runs a chance of being wet," said the other; and then there was a burst of brutal laughter. Dantès did not comprehend the jest, but his hair stood erect on his head.

"Well, here we are at last," said one of them; "a little farther—a little farther," said the other. "You know very well that the last was stopped on his way, dashed on the rocks, and the governor told us next day that we were careless fellows."

They ascended five or six more steps, and then Dantès felt that they took him one by the head and the other by the heels, and swung him to

avoid being seen. When he arose a second time, he was fifty paces from where he had first sunk. He saw overhead a black and tempestuous sky, over which the wind was driving the fleeting vapours that occasionally suffered a twinkling star to appear; before him was the vast expanse of waters, sombre and terrible, whose waves foamed and roared as if before the approach of a storm. Behind him, blacker than the sea, blacker than the sky, rose, like a phantom, the giant of granite, whose projecting crags seemed like arms extended to seize their prey; and on the highest rock was a torch that lighted two figures. He fancied these two forms were looking at the sea; and doubtless these strange grave-diggers had heard his cry. Dantès dived again, and remained a long time beneath the water. This manœuvre was already familiar to him, and usually attracted a crowd of spectators in the bay before the lighthouse at Marseilles when he swam there, and who, with one accord, pronounced him the best swimmer in the port. When he reappeared the light had disappeared.

It was necessary to strike out to sea. Ratonneau and Pomègue are the nearest isles of all those that surround the Château d'If; but Ratonneau and Pomègue are inhabited, together with the islet of Daume; Tiboulen or Lemaire were the most secure. The isles of Tiboulen and Lemaire are a league from the Château d'If; Dantès, nevertheless, determined to make for them. But how could he find his way in the darkness of the night? At this moment he saw before him, like a brilliant star, the lighthouse of Planier. By leaving this light on the right, he kept the isle of Tiboulen a little on the left; by turning to the left, therefore, he would find it. But, as we have said, it was at least a league from the Château d'If to this island. Often in prison Faria had said to him, when he saw him idle and inactive, "Dantès, you must not give way to this listlessness; you will be drowned if you seek to escape, and your strength has not been properly exercised and prepared for exertion." These words rang in Dantès' ears, even beneath the waves; he hastened to cleave his way through them to see if he had not lost his strength. He found with pleasure that his captivity had taken away nothing of his power, and that he was still master of that element on whose bosom he had so often sported as a boy.

Fear, that relentless pursuer, clogged Dantès' efforts. He listened if any noise was audible; each time that he rose over the waves his looks scanned the horizon, and strove to penetrate the darkness. Every wave seemed a boat in his pursuit, and he redoubled exertions that increased his distance from the château, but the repetition of which weakened his strength. He swam on still, and already the terrible château had disappeared in the darkness. He could not see it, but he *felt* its presence. An hour passed, during which Dantès, excited by the feeling of freedom, continued to cleave the waves. "Let us see," said he, "I have swum above an hour, but, as the wind is against me, that has retarded my speed; however, if I am not mistaken, I must be close to the isle of Tiboulen. But what if I were mistaken?" A shudder passed over him. He sought to tread water, in order to rest himself; but the sea was too violent, and he felt that he could not make use of this means of repose.

"Well," said he, "I will swim on until I am worn out, or the cramp seizes me, and then I shall sink;" and he struck out with the energy of despair.

Suddenly the sky seemed to him to become still darker and more dense, and compact clouds lowered towards him; at the same time he felt a violent pain in his knee. His imagination told him a ball had struck him, and that in a moment he would hear the report; but he heard nothing.

Dantès put out his hand, and felt resistance ; he then extended his leg, and felt the land, and in an instant guessed the nature of the object he had taken for a cloud.

Before him rose a mass of strangely-formed rocks, that resembled nothing so much as a vast fire petrified at the moment of its most fervent combustion. It was the isle of Tiboulén. Dantès rose, advanced a few steps, and, with a fervent prayer of gratitude, stretched himself on the granite, which seemed to him softer than down. Then, in spite of the wind and rain, he fell into the deep sweet sleep of those worn out by fatigue. At the expiration of an hour Edmond was awakened by the roar of the thunder. The tempest was unchained and let loose in all its fury ; from time to time a flash of lightning stretched across the heavens like a fiery serpent, lighting up the clouds that rolled on like the waves of an immense chaos.

Dantès had not been deceived—he had reached the first of the two isles, which was, in reality, Tiboulén. He knew that it was barren and without shelter ; but when the sea became more calm, he resolved to plunge into its waves again, and swim to Lemaire, equally arid, but larger, and consequently better adapted for concealment.

An overhanging rock offered him a temporary shelter, and scarcely had he availed himself of it when the tempest burst forth in all its fury. Edmond felt the rock beneath which he lay tremble ; the waves, dashing themselves against the granite rock, wetted him with their spray. In safety, as he was, he felt himself become giddy in the midst of this war of the elements and the dazzling brightness of the lightning. It seemed to him that the island trembled to its base, and that it would, like a vessel at anchor, break her moorings, and bear him off into the centre of the storm. He then recollected that he had not eaten or drunk for four-and-twenty hours. He extended his hands, and drank greedily of the rain.

his captivity he had forgotten it. He turned towards the fortress, and looked both at the sea and the land. The gloomy building rose from the bosom of the ocean with that imposing majesty of inanimate objects that seems at once to watch and to command. It was about five o'clock. The sea continued to grow calmer.

"In two or three hours," thought Dantès, "the turnkey will enter my chamber, find the body of my poor friend, recognise it, seek for me in vain, and give the alarm. Then the passage will be discovered; the men who cast me into the sea, and who must have heard the cry I uttered, will be questioned. Then boats filled with armed soldiers will pursue the wretched fugitive. The cannon will warn every one to refuse shelter to a man wandering about naked and famished. The police of Marseilles will be on the alert by land, whilst the governor pursues me by sea. I am cold, I am hungry. I have lost even the knife that saved me. Oh, my God! I have suffered enough surely. Have pity on me, and do for me what I am unable to do for myself."

As Dantès (his eyes turned in the direction of the Château d'If) uttered this prayer, he saw appear, at the extremity of the isle of Pomègue, like a bird skimming over the sea, a small bark, that the eye of a sailor alone could recognise as a Genoese tartane. She was coming out of Marseilles harbour, and was standing out to sea rapidly, her sharp prow cleaving through the waves. "Oh!" cried Edmond, "to think that in half an hour I could join her, did I not fear being questioned, detected, and conveyed back to Marseilles! What can I do? What story can I invent? Under pretext of trading along the coast, these men, who are in reality smugglers, will prefer selling me to doing a good action. I must wait. But I cannot—I am starving. In a few hours my strength will be utterly exhausted; besides, perhaps I have not been missed at the fortress. I can pass as one of the sailors wrecked last night. This story will pass current, for there is no one left to contradict me."

As he spoke, Dantès looked towards the spot where the fishing-vessel had been wrecked, and started. The red cap of one of the sailors hung to a point of the rock, and some beams that had formed part of the vessel's keel, floated at the foot of the crags. In an instant Dantès' plan was formed. He swam to the cap, placed it on his head, seized one of the beams, and struck out so as to cross the line the vessel was taking.

"I am saved!" murmured he. And this conviction restored his strength.

He soon perceived the vessel, which, having the wind right ahead, was tacking between the Château d'If and the tower of Planier. For an instant he feared lest the bark, instead of keeping in shore, should stand out to sea; but he soon saw by her manœuvres that she wished to pass, like most vessels bound for Italy, between the islands of Jaros and Calascraigne. However, the vessel and the swimmer insensibly neared one another, and in one of its tacks the bark approached within a quarter of a mile of him. He rose on the waves, making signs of distress; but no one on board perceived him, and the vessel stood on another tack. Dantès would have cried out, but he reflected that the wind would drown his voice.

It was then he rejoiced at his precaution in taking the beam, for without it he would have been unable, perhaps, to reach the vessel—certainly to return to shore, should he be unsuccessful in attracting attention.

Dantès, although almost sure as to what course the bark would take, had yet watched it anxiously until it tacked and stood towards him. Then he advanced; but before they had met, the vessel again changed her direction. By a violent effort he rose half out of the water, waving his

cap, and uttering a loud shout peculiar to sailors. This time he was both seen and heard, and the tartane instantly steered towards him. At the same time, he saw they were about to lower the boat.

An instant after, the boat, rowed by two men, advanced rapidly towards him. Dantès abandoned the beam, which he thought now useless, and swam vigorously to meet them. But he had reckoned too much upon his strength, and then he felt how serviceable the beam had been to him. His arms grew stiff, his legs had lost their flexibility, and he was almost breathless.

He uttered a second cry. The two sailors redoubled their efforts, and one of them cried in Italian, "Courage !"

The word reached his ear as a wave which he no longer had the strength to surmount passed over his head. He rose again to the surface, supporting himself by one of those desperate efforts a drowning man makes, uttered a third cry, and felt himself sink again, as if the fatal bullet were again tied to his feet. The water passed over his head, and the sky seemed livid. A violent effort again brought him to the surface. He felt as if something seized him by the hair, but he saw and heard nothing. He had fainted.

When he opened his eyes, Dantès found himself on the deck of the tartane. His first care was to see what direction they were pursuing. They were rapidly leaving the Château d'If behind. Dantès was so exhausted that the exclamation of joy he uttered was mistaken for a sigh.

As we have said, he was lying on the deck. A sailor was rubbing his limbs with a woollen cloth ; another, whom he recognised as the one who had cried out "Courage !" held a gourd full of rum to his mouth ; whilst the third, an old sailor, at once the pilot and captain, looked on with that

caped ; but I am a good sailor. Leave me at the first port you make ; I shall be sure to find employment."

"Do you know the Mediterranean?"—"I have sailed over it since my childhood."

"You know the best harbours?"—"There are few ports that I could not enter or leave with my eyes blinded."

"I say, captain," said the sailor who had cried "Courage !" to Dantès, "if what he says is true, what hinders his staying with us?"

"If he says true," said the captain doubtfully. "But in his present condition he will promise anything, and take his chance of keeping it afterwards."

"I will do more than I promise," said Dantès.

"We shall see," returned the other, smiling.

"Where are you going to?" asked Dantès.—"To Leghorn."

"Then why, instead of tacking so frequently, do you not sail nearer the wind?"—"Because we should run straight on to the island of Rion."

"You shall pass it by twenty fathoms."—"Take the helm, and let us see what you know." The young man took the helm, ascertaining by a slight pressure if the vessel answered the rudder, and seeing that, without being a first-rate sailer, she yet was tolerably obedient,—

"To the braces," said he. The four seamen, who composed the crew, obeyed, whilst the pilot looked on. "Haul taut."—They obeyed.

"Belay." This order was also executed ; and the vessel passed as Dantès had predicted, twenty fathoms to the right.

"Bravo !" said the captain.—"Bravo !" repeated the sailors. And they all regarded with astonishment this man, whose eye had recovered an intelligence and his body a vigour they were far from suspecting.

"You see," said Dantès, quitting the helm, "I shall be of some use to you, at least during the voyage. If you do not want me at Leghorn, you can leave me there ; and I will pay you out of the first wages I get, for my food and the clothes you lend me."

"Ah," said the captain, "we can agree very well, if you are reasonable."—"Give me what you give the others, and all will be arranged," returned Dantès.

"That's not fair," said the seaman who had saved Dantès ; "for you know more than we do."

"What is that to you, Jacopo?" returned the captain. "Every one is free to ask what he pleases."—"That's true," replied Jacopo ; "I only made a remark."

"Well, you would do much better to lend him a jacket and a pair of trousers, if you have them."

"No," said Jacopo ; "but I have a shirt and a pair of trousers."

"That is all I want," interrupted Dantès. Jacopo dived into the hold and soon returned with what Edmond wanted.

"Now, then, do you wish for anything else?" said the patron.

"A piece of bread and another glass of the capital rum I tasted, for I have not eaten or drunk for a long time." He had not tasted food for forty hours. A piece of bread was brought, and Jacopo offered him the gourd.

"Larboard your helm," cried the captain to the steersman. Dantès glanced to the same side as he lifted the gourd to his mouth ; but his hand stopped.

"Halloa ! what's the matter at the Château d'If?" said the captain.

A small white cloud, which had attracted Dantès' attention, crowned

the summit of the bastion of the Château d'If. At the same moment the faint report of a gun was heard. The sailors looked at one another.

"What is this?" asked the captain.

"A prisoner has escaped from the Château d'If; and they are firing the alarm gun," replied Dantès. The captain glanced at him; but he had lifted the rum to his lips, and was drinking it with so much composure, that his suspicions, if he had any, died away.

"At any rate," murmured he, "if it be, so much the better, for I have made a rare acquisition." Under pretence of being fatigued, Dantès asked to take the helm; the steersman, enchanted to be relieved, looked at the captain, and the latter by a sign indicated that he might abandon it to his new comrade. Dantès could thus keep his eyes on Marseilles.

"What is the day of the month?" asked he of Jacopo, who sat down beside him.—"The 28th of February!"

"In what year?"—"In what year—you ask me in what year?"

"Yes," replied the young man, "I ask you in what year!"—"You have forgotten then?"

"I have been so frightened last night," replied Dantès, smiling, "that I have almost lost my memory. I ask you what year is it?"

"The year 1829," returned Jacopo. It was fourteen years day for day since Dantès' arrest. He was nineteen when he entered the Château d'If; he was thirty-three when he escaped. A sorrowful smile passed over his face; he asked himself what had become of Mercédès, who must believe him dead. Then his eyes lighted up with hatred as he thought of the three men who had caused him so long and wretched a captivity. He renewed against Danglars, Fernand, and Villefort the oath of implacable vengeance he had made in his dungeon. This oath was no longer a vain menace; for the fastest sailer in the Mediterranean would have been unable to overtake the little tartane, that with every stitch of canvas set was
going before the wind to Leghorn.

secrets of his trade. But the skilful manner in which Dantès had manœuvred the little bark had entirely reassured him; and then, when he saw the light smoke floating like a plume above the bastion of the Château d'If, and heard the distant explosion, he was instantly struck with the idea that he had on board his vessel one for whom, like the goings in and comings out of kings, they accord salutes of cannons. This made him less uneasy, it must be owned, than if the new-comer had proved a custom-house officer; but this latter supposition also disappeared like the first, when he beheld the perfect tranquillity of his recruit.

Edmond thus had the advantage of knowing what the owner was, without the owner knowing who he was; and however the old sailor and his crew tried to "pump" him, they extracted nothing more from him; giving accurate descriptions of Naples and Malta, which he knew as well as Marseilles, and persisting stoutly in his first statement. Thus the Genoese, subtle as he was, was duped by Edmond, in whose favour his mild demeanour, his nautical skill, and his admirable dissimulation, pleaded. Moreover, it is possible that the Genoese was one of those shrewd persons who know nothing but what they should know, and believe nothing but what they should believe.

It was thus, in this reciprocal position, that they reached Leghorn. Here Edmond was to undergo another trial; it was to see if he should recognise himself, never having beheld his own features for fourteen years. He had preserved a tolerably good remembrance of what the youth had been, and was now to find what the man had become. His comrades believed that his vow was fulfilled, as he had twenty times touched at Leghorn before he remembered a barber in the Rue Saint-Ferdinand; he went there to have his beard and hair cut. The barber gazed in amazement at this man with the long hair and beard, thick and black as it was, and resembling one of Titian's glorious heads. At this period it was not the fashion to wear so large a beard and hair so long; now a barber would only be surprised if a man gifted with such advantages should consent voluntarily to deprive himself of them. The Leghorn barber went to work without a single observation.

When the operation was concluded, when Edmond felt his chin was completely smooth, and his hair reduced to its usual length, he requested a looking-glass in which he might see himself. He was now, as we have said, three-and-thirty years of age, and his fourteen years' imprisonment had produced a great moral change in his appearance. Dantès had entered the Château d'If with the round, open, smiling face of a young and happy man, with whom the early paths of life have been smooth, and who rely on the future as a natural deduction of the past. This was now all changed. His oval face was lengthened, his smiling mouth had assumed the firm and marked lines which betoken resolution; his eyebrows were arched beneath a large and thoughtful wrinkle; his eyes were full of melancholy; and from their depths occasionally sparkled gloomy fires of misanthropy and hatred; his complexion, so long kept from the sun, had now that pale colour which produces, when the features are encircled with black hair, the aristocratic beauty of the man of the north; the deep learning he had acquired had besides diffused over his features the rays of extreme intellect; and he had also acquired, although previously a tall man, that vigour which a frame possesses which has so long concentrated all its force within itself.

To the elegance of a nervous and slight form had succeeded the solidity of a rounded and muscular figure. As to his voice, prayers, sighs, and

imprecations had changed it now into a soft and singularly touching tone, and now into a sound rude and almost hoarse. Moreover, being perpetually in twilight or darkness, his eyes had acquired that singular faculty of distinguishing objects in the night common to the hyena and the wolf. Edmond smiled when he beheld himself : it was impossible that his best friend—if, indeed, he had any friend left—could recognise him ; he could not recognise himself.

The master of *La Jeune Amélie*, who was very desirous of retaining amongst his crew a man of Edmond's value, had offered to him some advances out of his future profits, which Edmond had accepted. His next care on leaving the barber's who had achieved his first metamorphosis was to enter a shop and buy a complete sailor's suit—a garb, as we all know, very simple, and consisting of white trousers, a striped shirt, and a cap. It was in this costume, and bringing back to Jacopo the shirt and trousers he had lent him, that Edmond reappeared before the patron of *La Jeune Amélie*, who had made him tell his story over and over again before he could believe him, or recognise in the neat and trim sailor the man with thick and matted beard, his hair tangled with sea-weed, and his body soaking in sea-brine, whom he had picked up naked and nearly drowned. Attracted by his prepossessing appearance, he renewed his offers of an engagement to Dantès ; but Dantès, who had his own projects, would not agree for a longer time than three months.

La Jeune Amélie had a very active crew, very obedient to their captain, who lost as little time as possible. He had scarcely been a week at Leghorn before the hold of his vessel was filled with painted muslins, prohibited cottons, English powder, and tobacco on which the Crown had forgotten to put its mark. The master was to get all this out of Leghorn free of duties, and land it on the shores of Corsica, where certain speculators undertook to forward the cargo to France. They sailed : Edmond

eyes ; but he, with his gaze accustomed to the gloom of a prison, continued to see it after all the others, for he remained last upon deck. The next morn broke off the coast of Aleria ; all day they coasted, and in the evening saw the fires lighted on land ; when they were extinguished, they no doubt recognised the signals for landing, for a ship's lantern was hung up at the mast-head instead of the streamer, and they neared the shore within gunshot. Dantès remarked that at this time, too, the patron of *La Jeune Amélie* had, as he neared the land, mounted two small culverines, which, without making much noise, can throw a ball, of four to the pound, a thousand paces or so.

But on this occasion the precaution was superfluous, and everything proceeded with the utmost smoothness and politeness. Four shallops came off with very little noise alongside the bark, which, no doubt, in acknowledgment of the compliment, lowered her own shallop into the sea, and the five boats worked so well that by two o'clock in the morning all the cargo was out of *La Jeune Amélie* and on *terra firma*. The same night, such a man of regularity was the patron of *La Jeune Amélie*, that the profits were shared out, and each man had a hundred Tuscan livres, or about three guineas English. But the voyage was not ended. They turned the bowsprit towards Sardinia, where they intended to take in a cargo, which was to replace what had been discharged. The second operation was as successful as the first, *La Jeune Amélie* was in luck. This new cargo was destined for the coast of the Duchy of Lucca, and consisted almost entirely of Havannah cigars, sherry, and Malaga wines.

There they had a bit of a skirmish in getting rid of the duties ; the *gubelle* was, in truth, the everlasting enemy of the patron of *La Jeune Amélie*. A custom-house officer was laid low, and two sailors were wounded ; Dantès was one of the latter, a ball having touched him in the left shoulder. Dantès was almost glad of this affray, and almost pleased at being wounded, for they were rude lessons which taught him with what eye he could view danger, and with what endurance he could bear suffering. He had contemplated danger with a smile, and when wounded had exclaimed with the great philosopher, "Pain, thou art not an evil." He had, moreover, looked upon the custom-house officer wounded to death, and, whether from heat of blood produced by the *rencontre*, or the chill of human sentiment, this sight had made but slight impression upon him ; Dantès was on the way he desired to follow, and was moving towards the end he wished to achieve ; his heart was in a fair way of petrifying in his bosom. Jacopo, seeing him fall, had believed him killed, and rushing towards him raised him up, and then attended to him with all the kindness of an attached comrade.

This world was not then so good as Voltaire's Doctor Pangloss believed it, neither was it so wicked as Dantès thought it, since this man who had nothing to expect from his comrade but the inheritance of his share of the prize-money, testified so much sorrow when he saw him fall. Fortunately, as we have said, Edmond was only wounded, and with certain herbs gathered at certain seasons, and sold to the smugglers by the old Sardinian women, the wound soon closed. Edmond then resolved to try Jacopo, and offered him in return for his attention a share of his prize-money, but Jacopo refused it indignantly.

It resulted, therefore, from this kind of sympathetic devotion which Jacopo had bestowed on Edmond from the first time he saw him, that Edmond felt for Jacopo a certain degree of affection. But this sufficed for Jacopo, who already instinctively felt that Edmond had a right to

superiority of position—a superiority which Edmond had concealed from all others. And from this time the kindness which Edmond showed him was enough for the brave seaman.

Then in the long days on board ship, when the vessel, gliding on with security over the azure sea, required nothing, thanks to the favourable wind that swelled her sails, but the hand of the helmsman, Edmond, with a chart in his hand, became the instructor of Jacopo, as the poor Abbé Faria had been his tutor. He pointed out to him the bearings of the coast, explained to him the variations of the compass, and taught him to read in that vast book opened over our heads which they call heaven, and where God writes in azure with letters of diamonds. And when Jacopo inquired of him, “What is the use of teaching all these things to a poor sailor like me?” Edmond replied: “Who knows? You may one day be the captain of a vessel. Your fellow-countryman, Bonaparte, became emperor.” We had forgotten to say that Jacopo was a Corsican.

Two months and a half elapsed in these trips, and Edmond had become as skilful a coaster as he had been a hardy seaman; he had formed an acquaintance with all the smugglers on the coast, and learned all the masonic signs by which these half pirates recognise each other. He had passed and re-passed his isle of Monte-Cristo twenty times, but not once had he found an opportunity of landing there. He then formed a resolution. This was, as soon as his engagement with the patron of *La Jeune Amélie* ended, he would hire a small bark on his own account—for in his several voyages he had amassed a hundred piastres—and under some pretext land at the isle of Monte-Cristo. Then he would be free to make his researches, not perhaps entirely at liberty, for he would be doubtless watched by those who accompanied him. But in this world we must risk something. Prison had made Edmond prudent, and he was desirous of running no risk whatever. But in vain did he rack his imagination:

where all the languages of the known world were jumbled in a *lingua franca*. When he again joined the two persons who had been discussing, it had been decided that they should touch at Monte-Cristo, and set out on the following night. Edmond, being consulted, was of opinion that the island offered every possible security, and that great enterprises to be well done should be done quickly. Nothing then was altered in the plan arranged, and orders were given to get under weigh next night, and, wind and weather permitting, to gain, the day after, the waters of the neutral isle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ISLE OF MONTE-CRISTO.

THUS, at length, by one of those pieces of unlooked-for good fortune which sometimes occur to those on whom misfortune has for a long time spent itself, Dantès was about to arrive at his wished-for opportunity by simple and natural means, and land in the island without incurring any suspicion. One night only separated him from his departure so ardently wished for.

The night was one of the most feverish that Dantès had ever passed, and during its progress all the charms good and evil passed through his brain. If he closed his eyes, he saw the letters of Cardinal Spada written on the wall in characters of flame—if he slept for a moment, the wildest dreams haunted his brain. He descended into grottos paved with emeralds, with panels of rubies, and the roof glowing with diamond stalactites. Pearls fell drop by drop, as subterranean waters filter in their caves. Edmond, amazed, wonderstruck, filled his pockets with the radiant gems and then returned to daylight, when he discovered that his prizes were all converted into common pebbles. He then endeavoured to re-enter these marvellous grottos, but then beheld them only in the distance: and now the way serpentine into countless paths, and then the entrance became invisible, and in vain did he tax his memory for the magic and mysterious word which opened the splendid caverns of Ali Baba to the Arabian fisherman. All was useless, the treasure disappeared, and had again reverted to the genii from whom for a moment he had hoped to carry it off. The day came at length, and was almost as feverish as the night had been, but it brought reason to aid his imagination, and Dantès was then enabled to arrange a plan which had hitherto been vague and unsettled in his brain. Night came, and with it the preparation for departure, and these preparations served to conceal Dantès's agitation. He had by degrees assumed such authority over his companions that he was almost like a commander on board; and as his orders were always clear, distinct, and easy of execution, his comrades obeyed him with celerity and pleasure.

The old patron did not interfere, for he too had recognised the superiority of Dantès over the crew and himself. He saw in the young man his natural successor, and regretted that he had not a daughter, that he might have bound Edmond to him by a distinguished alliance. At seven o'clock in the evening all was ready, and at ten minutes past seven they doubled the lighthouse just as the beacon was kindled. The sea was calm, and, with a fresh breeze from the south-east, they sailed beneath a bright blue sky, in which God also lighted up in turn his beacon-lights, each of which is a world. Dantès told them that all hands might turn in, and he would take the helm. When the Maltese (for so they called Dantès) had said this, it was sufficient, and all went to their cots contentedly. This fre-

quently happened. Dantès, rejected by all the world, frequently experienced a desire for solitude ; and what solitude is at the same time more complete, more poetical, than that of a bark floating isolated on the sea during the obscurity of the night, in the silence of immensity, and under the eye of Heaven ?

Now this solitude was peopled with his thoughts, the night lighted up by his illusions, and the silence animated by his anticipations. When the patron awoke, the vessel was hurrying on with every sail set, and every sail full with the breeze. They were making nearly ten knots an hour. The isle of Monte-Cristo loomed large in the horizon. Edmond resigned the bark to the master's care, and went and lay down in his hammock ; but, in spite of a sleepless night, he could not close his eyes for a moment. Two hours afterwards he came on deck, as the boat was about to double the isle of Elba. They were just abreast of Mareciana, and beyond the flat but verdant isle of La Pianosa. The peak of Monte-Cristo, reddened by the burning sun, was seen against the azure sky. Dantès desired the helmsman to put down his helm, in order to leave La Pianosa on the right hand, as he knew that he should thus decrease the distance by two or three knots. About five o'clock in the evening the island was quite distinct, and everything on it was plainly perceptible, owing to that clearness of the atmosphere which is peculiar to the light which the rays of the sun cast at its setting.

Edmond gazed most earnestly at the mass of rocks which gave out all the variety of twilight colours, from the brightest pink to the deepest blue ; and from time to time his cheeks flushed, his brow became purple, and a mist passed over his eyes. Never did gamester whose whole fortune is staked on one cast of the die, experience the anguish which Edmond felt in his paroxysms of hope. Night came, and at ten o'clock p.m. they anchored. *La Jeune Amélie* was the first at the rendezvous. In spite of

right, soon came in sight, white and silent as a phantom, and cast anchor within a cable's length of shore.

Then the landing began. Dantès reflected as he worked on the shout of joy which, with a single word, he could produce from amongst all these men, if he gave utterance to the one unchanging thought that pervaded his heart ; but, far from disclosing this precious secret, he almost feared that he had already said too much, and by his restlessness and continual questions, his minute observations and evident pre-occupation, had aroused suspicions. Fortunately, as regarded this circumstance at least, with him the painful past reflected on his countenance an indelible sadness ; and the glimmerings of gaiety seen beneath this cloud were indeed but transitory.

No one had the slightest suspicion ; and when next day, taking a fowl-pie, powder, and shot, Dantès testified a desire to go and kill some of the wild goats that were seen springing from rock to rock, his wish was construed into a love of sport, or a desire for solitude. However, Jacopo insisted on following him ; and Dantès did not oppose this, fearing if he did so that he might incur distrust. Scarcely, however, had he gone a quarter of a league than, having killed a kid, he begged Jacopo to take it to his comrades, and request them to cook it, and when ready to let him know by firing a gun. This and some dried fruits, and a flask of the wine of Monte Pulciano, was the bill of fare. Dantès went forwards, looking behind and round about him from time to time. Having reached the summit of a rock, he saw, a thousand feet beneath him, his companions, whom Jacopo had rejoined, and who were all busy preparing the repast which Edmond's skill as a marksman had augmented with a capital dish.

Edmond looked at them for a moment with the sad and soft smile of a man superior to his fellows. " In two hours' time," said he, " these persons will depart richer by fifty piastres each, to go and risk their lives again by endeavouring to gain fifty more such pieces ; then they will return with a fortune of six hundred francs, and waste this treasure in some city with the pride of sultans and the insolence of nabobs. At this moment Hope makes me despise their riches, which seem to me contemptible. Yet perchance to-morrow deception will so act on me, that I shall, on compulsion, consider such a contemptible possession as the utmost happiness. " Oh, no ! " exclaimed Edmond, " that will not be. The wise, unerring Faria could not be mistaken in this one thing. Besides, it were better to die than to continue to lead this low and wretched life." Thus Dantès, who but three months before had no desire but liberty, had now not liberty enough, and panted for wealth. The cause was not in Dantès, but in Providence, who, whilst limiting the power of man, has filled him with boundless desires.

Meanwhile, by a way between two walls of rock, following a path worn by a torrent, and which, in all human probability, human foot had never before trod, Dantès approached the spot where he supposed the grottoes must have existed. Keeping along the coast, and examining the smallest object with serious attention, he thought he could trace on certain rocks marks made by the hand of man.

Time, which encrusts all physical substances with its mossy mantle, as it invests all things moral with its mantle of forgetfulness, seemed to have respected these signs, traced with a certain regularity, and probably with the design of leaving traces. Occasionally these marks disappeared beneath tufts of myrtle, which spread into large bushes laden with blossoms, or beneath parasitical lichen. It was thus requisite that Edmond should remove branches on one side or remove the mosses in order to retrace the

indicating marks which were to be his guides in this labyrinth. These signs had renewed the best hopes in Edmond's mind. Why should it not have been the cardinal who had first traced them, in order that they might, in the event of a catastrophe, which he could not foresee would have been so complete, serve as a guide for his nephew? This solitary place was precisely suited for a man desirous of burying a treasure. Only, might not these betraying marks have attracted other eyes than those for whom they were made? and had the dark and wondrous isle indeed faithfully guarded its precious secret?

It seemed, however, to Edmond, who was hidden from his comrades by the inequalities of the ground, that at sixty paces from the harbour the marks ceased; nor did they terminate at any grotto. A large round rock, placed solidly on its base, was the only spot to which they seemed to lead. Edmond reflected that perhaps instead of having reached the end he might have only touched on the beginning, and he therefore turned round and retraced his steps.

During this time his comrades had prepared the repast, had got some water from a spring, spread out the fruit and bread, and cooked the kid. Just at the moment when they were taking the dainty animal from the spit, they saw Edmond, who, light and daring as a chamois, was springing from rock to rock, and they fired the signal agreed upon. The sportsman instantly changed his direction, and ran quickly towards them. But at the moment when they were all following with their eyes his agile bounds with a rashness which gave them alarm, Edmond's foot slipped, and they saw him stagger on the edge of a rock and disappear. They all rushed towards him, for all loved Edmond in spite of his superiority; yet Jacopo reached him first.

He found Edmond stretched bleeding and almost senseless. He had rolled down a height of twelve or fifteen feet. They poured some drops of

slightest movement he made. "Vill!" said the patron, "for what may happen, it shall never be said that we deserved a good comrade like you. We will not go till evening." This very much astonished the sailors, although not one opposed it. The patron was so strict that this was the first time they had ever seen him give up an enterprise, or even delay an arrangement. Dantès would not allow that any such infraction of regular and proper rules should be made in his favour. "No, no," he said to the patron, "I was awkward, and it is just that I pay the penalty of my clumsiness. Leave me a small supply of biscuit, a gun, powder, and balls, to kill the kids or defend myself at need, and a pickaxe, to build me something like a shed if you delay in coming back for me."

"But you'll die of hunger," said the patron.—"I would rather do so," was Edmond's reply, "than suffer the inexpressible agonies which the slightest motion brings on." The patron turned towards his vessel, which was undulating in the small harbour, and, with her sails partly set, was ready for sea when all her toilette should be completed.

"What are we to do, Maltese?" asked the captain. "We cannot leave you here so, and yet we cannot stay."—"Go, go!" exclaimed Dantès.

"We shall be absent at least a week," said the patron, "and then we must run out of our course to come here and take you up again."

"Why," said Dantès, "if in two or three days you hail any fishing-boat, desire them to come here to me. I will pay twenty-five piastres for my passage back to Leghorn. If you do not come across one, return for me." The patron shook his head.

"Listen, Captain Baldi; there's one way of settling this," said Jacopo. "Do you go, and I will stay and take care of the wounded man."

"And give up your share of the venture," said Edmond, "to remain with me?"—"Yes," said Jacopo, "and without any hesitation."

"You are a good fellow and a kind-hearted messmate," replied Edmond, "and Heaven will recompense you for your generous intentions; but I do not wish any one to stay with me. A day or two's rest will set me up, and I hope I shall find amongst the rocks certain herbs most excellent for contusions."

A singular smile passed over Dantès's lips; he squeezed Jacopo's hand warmly; but nothing could shake his determination to remain—and remain alone. The smugglers left with Edmond what he had requested and set sail; but not without turning about several times, and each time making signs of a cordial leave-taking, to which Edmond replied with his hand only, as if he could not move the rest of his body. Then, when they had disappeared, he said with a smile,—"Tis strange that it should be amongst such men that we find proofs of friendship and devotion." Then he dragged himself cautiously to the top of a rock, from which he had a full view of the sea, and thence he saw the tartane complete her preparations for sailing, weigh anchor, and, balancing herself as gracefully as a water-fowl ere it takes to the wing, set sail. At the end of an hour she was completely out of sight; at least, it was impossible for the wounded man to see her any longer from the spot where he was. Then Dantès rose more agile and light than the kid amongst the myrtles and shrubs of these wild rocks, took his gun in one hand, his pickaxe in the other, and hastened towards the rock on which the marks he had noted terminated. "And now," he exclaimed, remembering the tale of the Arabian fisherman, which Faria had related to him, "now, open sesame!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SECRET CAVE.

THE sun had nearly reached the meridian, and his scorching rays fell full on the rocks, which seemed themselves sensible of the heat. Thousands of grasshoppers, hidden in the bushes, chirped with a monotonous and dull note ; the leaves of the myrtle and olive trees waved and rustled in the wind. At every step that Edmond took he disturbed the lizards glittering with the hues of the emerald ; afar off he saw the wild goats bounding from crag to crag. In a word, the isle was inhabited, yet Edmond felt himself alone, guided by the hand of God. He felt an indescribable sensation somewhat akin to dread—that dread of the daylight which even in the desert makes us fear we are watched and observed. This feeling was so strong, that at the moment when Edmond was about to commence his labour, he stopped, laid down his pickaxe, seized his gun, mounted to the summit of the highest rock, and from thence gazed round in every direction.

But it was not upon Corsica, the very houses of which he could distinguish ; nor on Sardinia ; nor on the isle of Elba, with its historical associations ; nor upon the almost imperceptible line that to the experienced eye of a sailor alone revealed the coast of Genoa the proud, and Leghorn the commercial, that he gazed. It was at the brigantine that had left in the morning, and the tartane that had just set sail, that Edmond fixed his eyes. The first was just disappearing in the straits of Bonifacio ; the other, following an opposite direction, was about to round the island of Corsica. This sight reassured him. He then looked at the objects near him. He saw himself on the highest point of the isle ; a statue on this vast pedestal of granite, nothing human appearing in sight, whilst the blue ocean beat against the base of the island, and covered it with a fringe of

Dantès raised the earth carefully, and detected, or fancied he detected, the ingenious artifice. He attacked this wall, cemented by the hand of Time, with his pickaxe. After ten minutes' labour the wall gave way, and a hole large enough to insert the arm was opened. Dantès went and cut the strongest olive-tree he could find, stripped off its branches, inserted it in the hole, and used it as a lever. But the rock was too heavy, and too firmly wedged, to be moved by any one man, were he Hercules himself. Dantès reflected that he must attack this wedge. But how? He cast his eyes around, and saw the horn full of powder which his friend Jacopo had left him. He smiled; the infernal invention would serve him for this purpose. With the aid of his pickaxe, Dantès dug between the upper rock and the one that supported it, a mine similar to those formed by pioneers when they wish to spare human labour, filled it with powder, then made a match by rolling his handkerchief in saltpetre. He lighted it and retired. The explosion was instantaneous: the upper rock was lifted from its base by the terrific force of the powder; the lower one flew into pieces; thousands of insects escaped from the aperture Dantès had previously formed, and a huge snake, like the guardian demon of the treasure, rolled himself along with a sinuous motion, and disappeared.

Dantès approached the upper rock, which now, without any support, leant towards the sea. The intrepid treasure-seeker walked round it, and, selecting the spot from whence it appeared most easy to attack it, placed his lever in one of the crevices, and strained every nerve to move the mass. The rock, already shaken by the explosion, tottered on its base. Dantès redoubled his efforts; he seemed like one of the ancient Titans, who uprooted the mountains to hurl against the father of the gods. The rock yielded, rolled, bounded, and finally disappeared in the ocean.

On the spot it had occupied, was visible a circular place, and which exposed an iron ring let into a square flag-stone. Dantès uttered a cry of joy and surprise; never had a first attempt been crowned with more perfect success. He would fain have continued, but his knees trembled, his heart beat so violently, and his eyes became so dim, that he was forced to pause. This feeling lasted but for a moment. Edmond inserted his lever in the ring, and exerting all his strength, the flag-stone yielded, and disclosed a kind of stair that descended until it was lost in the obscurity of a subterraneous grotto. Any one else would have rushed on with a cry of joy. Dantès turned pale, hesitated, and reflected. "Come," said he to himself, "be a man. I am accustomed to adversity. I must not be cast down by the discovery that I have been deceived. What, then, would be the use of all I have suffered? The heart breaks when, after having been elated by flattering hopes, it sees all these illusions destroyed. Faria has dreamed this; the Cardinal Spada buried no treasure here; perhaps he never came here, or if he did, Cæsar Borgia, the intrepid adventurer, the stealthy and indefatigable plunderer, has followed him, discovered his traces, pursued them as I have done, like me, raised the stone, and descending before me, has left me nothing." He remained motionless and pensive, his eyes fixed on the sombre aperture that was open at his feet.

"Now that I expect nothing, now that I no longer entertain the slightest hopes, the end of this adventure becomes a simple matter of curiosity." And he remained again motionless and thoughtful.

"Yes, yes; this is an adventure worthy a place in the lights and shades of the life of this royal bandit. This fabulous event has formed but a link of a vast chain. Yes, Borgia has been here, a torch in one hand, a sword in the other, whilst within twenty paces, at the foot of this rock,

perhaps two guards kept watch on land and sea, whilst their master descended as I am about to descend, dispelling the darkness before his terrible advance."

"But what was the fate of these guards who thus possessed his secret?" asked Dantès of himself.

"The fate," replied he, smiling, "of those who buried Alaric."

"Yet, had he come," thought Dantès, "he would have found the treasure, and Borgia, he who compared Italy to an artichoke, which he could devour leaf by leaf, knew too well the value of time to waste it in replacing this rock. I will go down."

Then he descended; a smile on his lips, and murmuring that last word of human philosophy, "Perhaps!" But instead of the darkness, and the thick and mephitic atmosphere he had expected to find, Dantès saw a dim and bluish light, which, as well as the air, entered, not merely by the aperture he had just formed, but by the interstices and crevices of the rock which were visible from without, and through which he could distinguish the blue sky and the waving branches of the evergreen oaks, and the tendrils of the creepers that grew from the rocks. After having stood a few minutes in the cavern, the atmosphere of which was rather warm than damp, Dantès' eye, habituated as it was to darkness, could pierce even to the remotest angles of the cavern, which was of granite that sparkled like diamonds. "Alas!" said Edmond, smiling, "these are the treasures the cardinal has left; and the good abbé, seeing in a dream these glittering walls, has indulged in fallacious hopes."

But he called to mind the words of the will, which he knew by heart: "In the farthest angle of the second opening," said the cardinal's will. He had only found the first grotto; he had now to seek the second. Dantès commenced his search. He reflected that this second grotto must, doubtless, penetrate deeper into the isle; he examined the stones, and

watching him, but in reality because he felt he was ready to faint. The isle was deserted, and the sun seemed to cover it with its fiery glance ; afar off a few small fishing-boats studded the bosom of the blue ocean.

Dantès had tasted nothing, but he thought not of hunger at such a moment ; he hastily swallowed a few drops of rum, and again entered the cavern. The pickaxe that had seemed so heavy, was now like a feather in his grasp ; he seized it, and attacked the wall. After several blows he perceived that the stones were not cemented, but merely placed one upon the other, and covered with stucco ; he inserted the point of his pickaxe, and using the handle as a lever, soon saw with joy the stone turn as if on hinges, and fall at his feet. He had nothing more to do now, but with the iron tooth of the pickaxe to draw the stones towards him one by one. The first aperture was sufficiently large to enter, but by waiting, he could still cling to hope, and retard the certainty of deception. At last, after fresh hesitation, Dantès entered the second grotto. The second grotto was lower and more gloomy than the former ; the air that could only enter by the newly-formed opening had that mephitic smell Dantès was surprised not to find in the first. He waited in order to allow pure air to displace the foul atmosphere, and then entered. At the left of the opening was a dark and deep angle. But to Dantès' eye there was no darkness. He glanced round this second grotto ; it was, like the first, empty.

The treasure, if it existed, was buried in this corner. The time had at length arrived ; two feet of earth removed, and Dantès' fate would be decided. He advanced towards the angle, and summoning all his resolution, attacked the ground with the pickaxe. At the fifth or sixth blow the pickaxe struck against an iron substance. Never did funeral knell, never did alarm-bell produce a greater effect on the hearer. Had Dantès found nothing he could not have become more ghastly pale. He again struck his pickaxe into the earth, and encountered the same resistance, but not the same sound. "It is a casket of wood bound with iron," thought he. At this moment a shadow passed rapidly before the opening ; Dantes seized his gun, sprang through the opening, and mounted the stair. A wild goat had passed before the mouth of the cave, and was feeding at a little distance. This would have been a favourable occasion to secure his dinner ; but Dantès feared lest the report of his gun should attract attention.

He reflected an instant, cut a branch of a resinous tree, lighted it at the fire at which the smugglers had prepared their breakfast, and descended with this torch. He wished to see all. He approached the hole he had formed with the torch, and saw that his pickaxe had in reality struck against iron and wood. He planted his torch in the ground and resumed his labour. In an instant a space three feet long by two feet broad was cleared, and Dantès could see an oaken coffer, bound with cut steel ; in the midst of the lid he saw engraved on a silver plate, which was still untarnished, the arms of the Spada family—viz., a sword, *pale*, on an oval shield, like all the Italian armorial bearings, and surmounted by a cardinal's hat ; Dantès easily recognised them, Faria had so often drawn them for him. There was no longer any doubt the treasure was there : no one would have been at such pains to conceal an empty casket. In an instant he had cleared every obstacle away, and he saw successively the lock, placed between two padlocks, and the two handles at each end, all carved as things were carved at that epoch, when art rendered the commonest metals precious. Dantès seized the handles, and strove to lift the coffer ; it was impossible. He sought to open it ; lock and padlock were closed ;

these faithful guardians seemed unwilling to surrender their trust. Dantès inserted the sharp end of the pickaxe between the coffer and the lid, and pressing with all his force on the handle, burst open the fastenings. The hinges yielded in their turn and fell, still holding in their grasp fragments of the planks, and all was open.

A vertigo seized Edmond ; he cocked his gun and laid it beside him. He then closed his eyes as children do in order to perceive in shining night of their own imagination more stars than are visible in the firmament ; then he re-opened them, and stood motionless with amazement. Three compartments divided the coffer. In the first, blazed piles of golden coin ; in the second, bars of unpolished gold, which possessed nothing attractive save their value, were ranged ; in the third, Edmond grasped handfuls of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, which, as they fell on one another, sounded like hail against glass. After having touched, felt, examined these treasures, Edmond rushed through the caverns like a man seized with frenzy ; he leapt on a rock, from whence he could behold the sea. He was alone. Alone with these countless, these unheard-of treasures ! Was he awake, or was it but a dream ?

He would fain have gazed upon his gold, and yet he had not strength enough ; for an instant he leaned his head in his hands as if to prevent his senses from leaving him, and then rushed madly about the rocks of Monte-Cristo, terrifying the wild goats and scaring the sea-fowls with his wild cries and gestures ; then he returned, and, still unable to believe the evidence of his senses, rushed into the grotto, and found himself before this mine of gold and jewels. This time he fell on his knees, and, clasping his hands convulsively, uttered a prayer intelligible to God alone. He soon felt himself calmer and more happy, for now only he began to credit his felicity. He then set himself to work to count his fortune. There

followed the little vessel with their eyes so long as it remained visible ; they then turned their conjectures upon her probable destination. Some insisted she was making for Corsica, others the isle of Elba ; bets were offered to any amount that she was bound for Spain ; while Africa was positively reported by many persons as her intended course ; but no one thought of Monte-Cristo. Yet thither it was that Dantès guided his vessel, and at Monte-Cristo he arrived at the close of the second day ; his bark had proved herself a first-class sailer, and had come the distance from Genoa in thirty-five hours. Dantès had carefully noted the general appearance of the shore, and, instead of landing at the usual place, he dropped anchor in the little creek. The isle was utterly deserted, nor did it seem as though human foot had trodden on it since he quitted it : his treasure was just as he had left it. Early on the following morning he commenced the removal of his riches, and ere nightfall the whole of his immense wealth was safely deposited in the secret compartments of his hidden closet.

A week passed by. Dantès employed it in manœuvring his yacht round the island, studying it as a skilful horseman would the animal he destined for some important service, till at the end of that time he was perfectly conversant with its good and bad qualities. The former Dantès proposed to augment, the latter to remedy.

Upon the eighth day of his being on the island he discerned a small vessel crowding all sail towards Monte-Cristo. As it neared, he recognised it as the bark he had given to Jacopo. He immediately signalled it. His signal was returned, and in two hours afterwards the bark lay at anchor beside the yacht. A mournful answer awaited each of Edmond's eager inquiries as to the information Jacopo had obtained. Old Dantès was dead, and Mercédès had disappeared. Dantès listened to these melancholy tidings with outward calmness ; but, leaping lightly ashore, he signified his desire to be quite alone. In a couple of hours he returned. Two of the men from Jacopo's bark came on board the yacht to assist in navigating it, and he commanded she should be steered direct to Marseilles. For his father's death he was in some manner prepared ; but how to account for the mysterious disappearance of Mercédès he knew not.

Without divulging his secret, Dantès could not give sufficiently clear instructions to an agent. There were, besides, other particulars he was desirous of ascertaining, and those were of a nature he alone could investigate in a manner satisfactory to himself. His looking-glass had assured him, during his stay at Leghorn, that he ran no risk of recognition ; added to which, he had now the means of adopting any disguise he thought proper. One fine morning, then, his yacht, followed by the little bark, boldly entered the port of Marseilles, and anchored exactly opposite the memorable spot from whence, on the never-to-be-forgotten night of his departure for the Château d'If, he had been put on board the vessel destined to convey him thither. Still Dantès could not view without a shudder the approach of a gendarme who accompanied the officers deputed to demand his bill of health ere the yacht was permitted to hold communication with the shore ; but with that perfect self-possession he had acquired during his acquaintance with Faria, Dantès coolly presented an English passport he had obtained from Leghorn, and, with that prompt attention which all such English documents receive, he was informed there existed no obstacle to his immediate debarkation.

The first object that attracted the attention of Dantès, as he landed on the Canebière, was one of the crew belonging to the *Pharaon*. Edmond

hailed the appearance of this man, who had served under himself, as a sure test of the safe and perfect change time had worked in his own appearance. Going straight towards him, he commenced a variety of questions on different subjects, carefully watching the man's countenance as he did so ; but not a word or look implied his having the slightest idea of ever having seen before the individual with whom he was then conversing. Giving the sailor a piece of money in return for his civility, Dantes proceeded onwards ; but ere he had gone many steps he heard the man loudly calling him to stop. Dantès instantly turned to meet him. " I beg your pardon, sir," said the honest fellow, in almost breathless haste, " but I believe you made a mistake : you intended to give me a two-franc piece, and see, you gave me a double Napoleon."—" Thank you, my good friend. I see that I have made a trifling mistake, as you say ; but by way of rewarding your honest spirit I give you another double Napoleon, that you may drink to my health, and be able to ask your messmates to join you."

So extreme was the surprise of the sailor, that he was unable even to thank Edmond, whose receding figure he continued to gaze after in speechless astonishment. At length, when Dantès had wholly disappeared, he drew a deep breath, and, with another look at his gold, he returned to the quay, saying to himself, " Ah, that's one of them nabob gentlemen from Ingy, no doubt ; nobody else could afford to chuck gold about like that. Well, he said I was to drink his health, and so I will with all my heart."

Dantès, meanwhile, continued his route. Each step he trod oppressed his heart with fresh emotion : his first and most indelible recollections were there ; not a tree, not a street that he passed but seemed filled with dear and cherished reminiscences. And thus he proceeded onwards till he arrived at the end of the Rue de Noailles, from whence a full view of

Dantès : the very paper was different, while the articles of antiquated furniture with which the rooms had been filled in Edmond's time had all disappeared ; the four walls alone remained as he had left them. The bed belonging to the present occupants was placed as the former owner of the chamber had been accustomed to have his ; and, spite of his efforts to prevent it, the eyes of Edmond were suffused in tears as he reflected that on that spot his beloved parent had expired, vainly calling for his son. The young couple gazed with astonishment at the sight of their visitor's emotion, and wondered to see the large tears silently chase each other down his otherwise stern and immovable features ; but they felt the sacredness of his grief, and kindly refrained from questioning him as to its cause, while, with instinctive delicacy, they left him to indulge his sorrow alone. When he withdrew from the scene of his painful recollections, they both accompanied him downstairs, reiterating their hope that he would come again whenever he pleased, and assuring him their poor dwelling should ever be open to him. As Edmond passed the door of similar rooms on the fourth floor, he paused to inquire whether Caderousse the tailor still dwelt there ; but he received for reply, that the individual in question had got into difficulties, and at the present time kept a small inn on the route from Bellegarde to Beaucaire.

Having obtained the address of the person to whom the house in the Allées de Meillan belonged, Dantès next proceeded thither, and, under the name of Lord Wilmore (the same appellation as that contained in his passport), purchased the small dwelling for the sum of 25,000 francs, at least 10,000 more than it was worth ; but had its owner asked ten times the sum he did, it would unhesitatingly have been given. The very same day the occupants of the apartments on the fifth floor of the house, now become the property of Dantès, were duly informed by the notary who had arranged the necessary transfer of deeds, &c., that the new landlord gave them their choice of any of the rooms in the house, without the least augmentation of rent, upon condition of their giving instant possession of the two small chambers they at present inhabited.

This strange event served to find food for wonder and curiosity in the neighbourhood of the Allées de Meillan, and a multitude of various conjectures were afloat as to the probable cause of the house being so suddenly and mysteriously disposed of ; but each surmise seemed to wander farther and farther from the truth. But that which raised public astonishment to a climax, and set all speculations at defiance, was the circumstance of the same stranger who had in the morning visited the Allées de Meillan being seen in the evening walking in the little village of the Catalans, and afterwards observed to enter a poor fisherman's hut, and to pass more than an hour in inquiring after persons who had either been dead or gone away for more than fifteen or sixteen years. But on the following day the family from whom all these particulars had been asked received a handsome present, consisting of an entirely new fishing-boat, with a full supply of excellent nets. The delighted recipients of these munificent gifts would gladly have poured out their thanks to their generous benefactor ; but they had seen him, upon quitting the hut, merely give some orders to a sailor, and then, springing lightly on horseback, quit Marseilles by the *Porte d'Aix*.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE AUBERGE OF PONT DU GARD.

SUCH of my readers as have made a pedestrian excursion to the south of France may perchance have noticed, midway between the town of Beaucaire and the village of Bellegarde, a small roadside inn, from the front of which hung, creaking and flapping in the wind, a sheet of tin covered with a caricature resemblance of the Pont du Gard. This modern place of entertainment stood on the left-hand side of the grand route, turning its back upon the Rhone. It also boasted of what in Languedoc is styled a garden, consisting of a small plot of ground, a full view of which might be obtained from a door immediately opposite the grand portal by which travellers were ushered in to partake of the hospitality of mine host of the Pont du Gard. This plaisance or garden, scorched up beneath the ardent sun of a latitude of thirty degrees, permitted nothing to thrive or scarcely live in its arid soil. A few dingy olives and stunted fig-trees struggled hard for existence, but their withered dusty foliage abundantly proved how unequal was the conflict. Between these sickly shrubs grew a scanty supply of garlic, tomatos, and eschalots; while, lone and solitary, like a forgotten sentinel, a tall pine raised its melancholy head in one of the corners of this unattractive spot, and displayed its flexible stem and fan-shaped summit dried and cracked by the withering influence of the mistral, that scourge of Provence.

In the surrounding plain, which more resembled a dusty lake than solid ground, were scattered a few miserable stalks of wheat, the effect, no doubt, of a curious desire on the part of the agriculturists of the country to see whether such a thing as the raising of grain in those parched regions was practicable. The scanty produce, however, served to accommodate the

he wore under his chin, thick and curly, and but slightly mingled with a few silvery threads. His naturally murky complexion had assumed a still further shade of brown from the habit the unfortunate man had acquired of stationing himself from early morning till latest eve at the threshold of his door, in eager hope that some traveller, either equestrian or pedestrian, might bless his eyes, and give him the delight of once more seeing a guest enter his doors ; but his patience and his expectations were alike useless ; yet there he stood, day after day, exposed to the meridional rays of a burning sun, with no other protection for his head than a red handkerchief twisted around it, after the manner of the Spanish muleteers. This anxious, careworn aubergiste was no other than our *ci-devant* acquaintance Caderousse. His wife, on the contrary, whose maiden name had been Madeleine Radelle, was pale, meagre, and sickly-looking. Born in the neighbourhood of Arles, she had shared in the beauty for which the females are proverbial ; but that beauty had gradually withered beneath the devastating influence of one of those slow fevers so prevalent in the vicinity of the waters of the Aiguemortes and the marshes of Camargue. She remained nearly always in her chamber, situated on the first floor ; sitting shivering in her chair, or extended languid and feeble on her bed, while her husband kept his daily watch at the door—a duty he performed with so much the greater willingness, as it saved him the necessity of listening to the endless complaints and murmurs of his helpmate, who never saw him without breaking out into bitter invectives against fate and the unmerited hardships she was called upon to endure ; to all of which her husband would calmly return an unvarying reply, couched in these philosophic words :

“Cease to grieve about it, La Carconte. It is God’s pleasure that you should suffer, and whether you like it or not, you must bear it.”

The sobriquet of La Carconte had been bestowed on Madeleine Radelle from the circumstance of her having been born in a village so called, situated between Salon and Lanbèze ; and as a custom existed among the inhabitants of that part of France where Caderousse lived of styling every person by some particular and distinctive appellation, her husband had bestowed on her the name of La Carconte in place of her sweet and euphonious name of Madeleine, which, in all probability, his rude guttural language would not have enabled him to pronounce. Still, let it not be supposed that amid this affected resignation to the will of Providence, the unfortunate aubergiste did not writhe under the double misery of seeing the hateful canal carry off alike his customers and profits, and the daily implication of his peevish partner’s murmurs and lamentations.

Like other dwellers of the south, he was a man of sober habits and moderate desires, but fond of external show, vain, and addicted to display. During the days of his prosperity, not a *fête*, festivity, or ceremonial took place without himself and wife being among the spectators. He dressed in the picturesque costume worn upon grand occasions by the inhabitants of the south of France, bearing equal resemblance to the style adopted both by the Catalans and Andalusians ; while La Carconte displayed the charming fashion prevalent among the females of Arles, a mode of attire borrowed equally from Greece and Arabia. But, by degrees, watch-chains, necklaces, many-coloured scarfs, embroidered bodices, velvet vests, elegantly-worked stockings, striped gaiters, and silver buckles for the shoes, all disappeared ; and Gaspard Caderousse, unable to appear abroad in his pristine splendour, had given up any further participation in these pomps and vanities, both for himself or wife, although a bitter feeling of

envious discontent filled his mind as the sound of mirth and merry music from the joyous revellers reached even the miserable hostelry to which he still clung, more for the shelter than the profit it afforded.

On the present day, Caderousse was, as usual, at his place of observation before the door, his eyes glancing listlessly from a piece of closely-shaven grass—on which some fowls were industriously, though fruitlessly, endeavouring to turn up some grain or insect suited to their palate—to the deserted road, the two extremities of which pointed respectively north and south, when he was roused from his daily speculations as to the possibility of the auberge of the Pont du Gard ever again being called upon to exercise its hospitable capabilities to any chance visitant by the shrill voice of his wife summoning him to her presence with all speed. Murmuring at the disagreeable interruption to his not very agreeable thoughts, he, however, proceeded to the floor in which was situated the chamber of his better half—taking care, however, preparatory to so doing, to set the entrance-door wide open, that, in the event of that *rara avis*, a traveller, passing by, it should be made perfectly clear to his comprehension that no ceremony was requisite in entering.

At the moment Caderousse quitted his sentry-like watch before the door, the road on which he so eagerly strained his sight was void and lonely as a desert at mid-day. There it lay stretched out, one interminable line of dust and sand, with its sides bordered by tall, meagre trees, altogether presenting so uninviting an appearance, that no one in their senses could have imagined that any traveller, at liberty to regulate his hours for journeying, would choose to expose himself to the scorch of a meridian sun in such a formidable Sahara. Nevertheless, had Caderousse but retained his post a few minutes longer, he might have caught a dim outline of something approaching from the direction of Bellegarde: as the moving object drew nearer, he would easily have perceived it consisted of a man

"You are welcome, sir, most welcome!" repeated the astonished Caderousse, in his blindest tones. "Now, then, Margontin," cried he, speaking to the dog, "will you be quiet? Pray don't heed him, sir!—he only barks, he never bites! I make no doubt a glass of good wine would be acceptable this dreadfully hot day!" Then perceiving for the first time the description of traveller he had to entertain, Caderousse hastily exclaimed: "A thousand pardons; your reverence! I really did not observe whom I had the honour to receive under my poor roof. What would you please to have, M. l'Abbé? What refreshment can I offer you? All I have is at your service."

The priest gazed on the individual addressing him with a long and searching gaze—there even seemed like a disposition on his part to court a similar scrutiny on the part of the aubergiste; then, remarking in the countenance of the latter no other expression than extreme surprise at his own want of attention to an inquiry so courteously worded, he deemed it as well to terminate this dumb show, and therefore said, speaking with a strong Italian accent: "You are, I presume, M. Caderousse?"—"Your reverence is quite correct," answered the host, even more surprised at the question than he had been by the silence which had prefaced it; "I am Gaspard Caderousse, at your service."

"Gaspard Caderousse!" rejoined the priest. "Yes, that agrees both with the baptismal appellation and surname of the individual I allude to. You formerly lived, I believe, in the Allées de Meillan, on the fourth floor of a small house situated there?"—"I did."

"Where you followed the business of a tailor?"—"True, I was a tailor, till the trade fell off so as not to afford me a living. Then, it is so very hot at Marseilles, that really I could bear it no longer; and it is my idea that all the respectable inhabitants will be obliged to follow my example and quit it. But talking of heat, is there nothing I can offer you by way of refreshment?"

"Yes; let me have a bottle of your best wine, and then, with your permission, we will resume our conversation from where we left off."

"As you please, M. l'Abbé," said Caderousse, who, anxious not to lose the present opportunity of finding a customer for one of the few bottles of vin de Cahors still remaining in his possession, hastily raised a trap-door in the floor of the apartment they were in, which served both as parlour and kitchen. Upon his issuing forth from his subterranean retreat at the expiration of five minutes, he found the abbé seated on a species of stool, leaning his elbow on a table, while Margontin, whose animosity seemed appeased by the traveller having pronounced the unusual command for refreshments, had crept up to him, and had established himself very comfortably between his knees, his long, skinny neck resting on his lap, while his dim eye was fixed earnestly on the traveller's face.

"Are you quite alone?" inquired the guest, as Caderousse placed before him the bottle of wine and a glass.—"Quite, quite alone," replied the man—"or, at least, all but so, M. l'Abbé; for my poor wife, who is the only person in the house besides myself, is laid up with illness, and unable to render me the least assistance, poor thing!"

"You are married, then?" said the priest, with a species of interest, glancing round as he spoke at the scanty style of the accommodation and humble fittings-up of the apartment.

"Ah, M. l'Abbé," said Caderousse, with a sigh, "it is easy to perceive I am not a rich man; but in this world a man does not thrive the better for being honest." The abbé fixed on him a searching, penetrating glance.

"I can certainly say that much for myself," replied the aubergiste, fairly sustaining the scrutiny of the abbé's gaze; "I can boast with truth of being an honest man; and," continued he, significantly shaking his head, "that is more than every one can say now-a-days."—"So much the better for you, if what you assert be true," said the abbé; "for I am firmly persuaded that, sooner or later, the good will be rewarded, and the wicked punished."

"Such words as those belong to your profession, M. l'Abbé," answered Caderousse, "and you do well to repeat them; but," added he, with a bitter expression of countenance, "you cannot make people believe them in opposition to what passes before them every day, when the reverse takes place, and it is the wicked man who prospers, and the honest, deserving man who suffers."

"You are wrong to speak thus," said the abbé; "and perhaps I may, in my own person, be able to prove to you how completely you are in error in coming to so mischievous and dangerous a conclusion."

"What mean you?" inquired Caderousse, with a look of surprise.

"In the first place, it is requisite I should be satisfied you are the person I am in search of."

"What proofs do you require?"—"Did you, in the year 1814 or 1815, know anything of a young sailor named Edmond Dantès?"

"Did I? I should think I did. Poor dear Edmond! Why, Edmond Dantès and myself were intimate friends!" exclaimed Caderousse, whose countenance assumed an almost purple hue, as he caught the penetrating gaze of the abbé fixed on him, while the clear, calm eye of the questioner seemed to cover him with confusion.

"You remind me," said the priest, "that the young man concerning whom I asked you was said to bear the name of Edmond."

"Said to bear the name!" repeated Caderousse, becoming excited and

eye of the abbé was employed in scrutinising the agitated features of the aubergiste.

"You knew the poor lad, then?" continued Caderousse.

"Nay, I was merely called to see him when on his dying bed, that I might administer to him the consolations of religion."

"And of what did he die?" asked Caderousse in a choking voice.

"Of what, think you, do young and strong men die in prison, when they have scarcely numbered their thirtieth year, unless it be of the horrors of that prison which has spread its stony walls against their breathing the air of heaven, or participating in the secret affections a gracious Creator permitted to find growth within the human breast? Edmond Dantès died in prison of sorrow and a broken heart." Caderousse wiped away the large beads of perspiration that gathered on his brow.

"But the strangest part of the story is," resumed the abbé, "that Dantès, even in his dying moments, swore by his crucified Redeemer, that he was utterly ignorant of the cause of his imprisonment."

"And so he was," murmured Caderousse. "How should he have been otherwise? Ah, M. l'Abbé, the poor fellow told you the truth."

"And for that reason, he besought me to try and clear up a mystery he had never been able to penetrate, and to clear his memory should any foul spot or stain have fallen on it." And here the look of the abbé, becoming more and more fixed, seemed to rest with ill-concealed satisfaction on the gloomy depression which seemed rapidly spreading over the countenance of Caderousse.

"A rich Englishman," continued the abbé, "who had been his companion in misfortune, but had been released from prison during the second restoration, was possessed of a diamond of immense value: this precious jewel he bestowed on Dantès upon himself quitting the prison, as a mark of his gratitude for the kindness and brotherly care with which Dantès had nursed him in a severe illness he underwent during his confinement. Instead of employing this diamond in attempting to bribe his gaolers, who might only have taken it and then betrayed him to the governor, Dantès carefully preserved it, that in the event of his getting out of prison he might have wherewithal to live, for the produce of such a diamond would have quite sufficed to make his fortune."

"Then, I suppose," asked Caderousse, with eager, glowing looks, "that it was a stone of immense value?"—"Why, everything is relative," answered the abbé. "To one in Edmond's position the diamond certainly was of great value. It was estimated at 50,000 francs."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Caderousse, "what a sum! 50,000 francs! Surely the diamond was as large as a nut to be worth all that."—"No," replied the abbé, "it was not of such a size as that; but you shall judge for yourself, I have it with me."

The sharp gaze of Caderousse was instantly directed towards the priest's garments, as though hoping to discover the talked-of treasure. Calmly drawing forth from his pocket a small box covered with black shagreen, the abbé opened it, and displayed to the delighted eyes of Caderousse the sparkling jewel it contained, set in a ring of admirable workmanship. "And that diamond," cried Caderousse, almost breathless with eager admiration, "you say, is worth 50,000 francs?"

"It is, without the setting, which is also valuable," replied the abbé, as he closed the box, and returned it to his pocket, while its brilliant hues seemed still to dance before the eyes of the fascinated aubergiste.

"But how comes this diamond in your possession, M. l'Abbé? Did

Edmond make you his heir?"—"No, merely his testamentary executor. When dying, the unfortunate youth said to me, 'I once possessed four dear and faithful friends, besides the maiden to whom I was betrothed: and I feel convinced they have all unfeignedly grieved over my loss. The name of one of the four friends I allude to is Caderousse.'" The aubergiste shivered as though he felt the dead cold hand of the betrayed Edmond grasping his own.

"Another of the number," continued the abbé, without seeming to notice the emotion of Caderousse, "'is called Danglars; and the third, spite of being my rival, entertained a very sincere affection for me.'" A fiendish smile played over the features of Caderousse, who was about to break in upon the abbé's speech, when the latter, waving his hand, said: "Allow me to finish first, and then if you have any observations to make, you can do so afterwards. 'The third of my friends, although my rival, was much attached to me,—his name was Fernand: that of my betrothed was——' Stay, stay," continued the abbé, "I have forgotten what he called her."—"Mercédès," cried Caderousse eagerly.

"True," said the abbé, with a stifled sigh, "Mercédès it was."

"Go on," urged Caderousse.

"Bring me a *carafe* of water," said the abbé.

Caderousse quickly performed the stranger's bidding; and after pouring some into a glass, and slowly swallowing its contents, the abbé, resuming his usual placidity of manner, said, as he placed his empty glass on the table:—"Where did we leave off?"

"Oh, that the betrothed of Edmond was called Mercédès."

"To be sure. 'Well, then,' said Dantès,—for you understand, I repeat his words just as he uttered them—'you will go to Marseilles.' Do you understand?"—"Perfectly."

"For the purpose of selling this diamond: the produce of which you

bread ; and that a man, a Christian, should be allowed to perish of hunger in the midst of other men equally Christians with himself, is too horrible for belief. Oh, it is impossible—utterly impossible ?”

“What I have said, I have said,” answered Caderousse.

“And you are a fool for having said anything about it,” said a voice from the top of the stairs. “Why should you meddle with what does not concern you ?”

The two male speakers turned round quickly, and perceived the sickly countenance of La Carconte leaning over the rail of the staircase ; attracted by the sound of voices, she had feebly dragged herself down the stairs, and, seated on the lower step, she had listened to the foregoing conversation. “Mind your own business, wife,” replied Caderousse, sharply. “This gentleman asks me for information, which common politeness will not permit me to refuse.”——“Politeness ! you simpleton !” retorted La Carconte. “What have you to do with politeness, I should like to know ? Better study a little common prudence. How do you know the motives that person may have for trying to extract all he can from you ?”

“I pledge you my sacred word, madame,” said the abbé, “that my intentions are free from all sorts of harm or injury to you or yours ; and that your husband can incur no risk, provided he answers me candidly.”——“Ah, that’s all very fine,” retorted the woman. “Nothing is easier than to begin with fair promises and assurances of nothing to fear ; but when poor, silly folks, like my husband there, have been persuaded to tell all they know, the promises and assurances of safety are quickly forgotten ; and at some moment when nobody is expecting it, behold trouble and misery, and all sorts of persecutions, are heaped on the unfortunate wretches, who cannot even see whence all their afflictions come.”

“Nay, nay, my good woman, make yourself perfectly easy, I beg of you. Whatever evils may befall you, they will not be occasioned by my instrumentality, that I solemnly promise you.”

Some inarticulate sounds escaped La Carconte, then letting her head, which she had raised during the excitement of conversation, again droop on to her lap, she commenced her usual aguish trembling, the result of her feverish attack, leaving the two speakers to resume the conversation, but still remaining herself so placed as to be able to hear every word they uttered. Again the abbé had been obliged to swallow a draught of water to calm the emotions that threatened to overpower him. When he had sufficiently recovered himself, he said :—“It appears, then, that the miserable old man you were telling me of, was forsaken by every one. Surely, had not such been the case, he would not have perished by so dreadful a death as you described.”

“Why, he was not altogether forsaken,” continued Caderousse ; “for Mercédès the Catalan and M. Morrel were very kind to him ; but somehow the poor old man had contracted a profound hatred of Fernand—the very person,” added Caderousse, with a bitter smile, “that you named just now as being one of Dantès’ faithful and attached friends.”

“And was he not so ?” asked the abbé.

“Gaspard ! Gaspard !” murmured the woman, from her seat on the stairs, “mind what you are saying !” Caderousse made no reply to these words, though evidently irritated and annoyed by the interruption, but, addressing the abbé, said :—“Can a man be faithful to another whose wife he covets and desires for himself ? But Dantès was so honourable and true in his own nature, that he believed everybody’s professions of friendship. Poor Edmond ! he was cruelly deceived ; but it was a happy thing

he never knew it, or he might have found it more difficult, when on his deathbed, to pardon his enemies. And, whatever people may say," continued Caderousse, in his native language, which was not altogether devoid of rude poetry, "I cannot help being more frightened at the idea of the malediction of the dead than the hatred of the living."—"Weak-minded coward!" exclaimed La Carconte.

"Do you, then, know in what manner Fernand injured Dantès?" inquired the abbé of Caderousse.

"Do I? No one better."—"Speak out then, say what it was!"

"Gaspard!" cried La Carconte, "I cannot force you to do otherwise than as you please, but if you are guided by me, you will have nothing to say on this subject."—"Well, well, wife," replied Caderousse, "I do not know but what you are right! I shall follow your advice."

"Then you are determined not to reveal the circumstances you alluded to?" said the abbé.—"Why, what good would it do?" asked Caderousse. "If the poor lad were living, and came to me to beg I would candidly tell which were his true and which his false friends, why, perhaps, I should not hesitate. But you tell me he is no more, and therefore can have nothing to do with hatred or revenge; so let all such feelings be buried with him."

"You prefer, then," said the abbé, "allowing me to bestow on men you say are false and treacherous, the reward intended for faithful friendship?"

"That is true enough," returned Caderousse. "You say truly, the gift of poor Edmond was not meant for such traitors as Fernand and Danglars; besides, what would it be to them? no more than a drop of water in the ocean."—"And remember, husband," chimed in La Carconte, "that to breathe one syllable against those two individuals would be to raise up against yourself two formidable enemies, who at a word could level you with the dust!"

that part intended for the elder Dantès, which I conceive myself at liberty to share equally with the four surviving persons."

"And wherefore among us four?" inquired Caderousse.

"As being the friends Edmond esteemed most faithful and devoted to him."—"I don't call those friends who betray and ruin you," murmured the wife, in her turn, in a low, muttering voice.

"Of course not!" rejoined Caderousse, quickly; "no more do I; and that was what I was observing to this gentleman just now. I said I looked upon it as a sacrilegious profanation to reward treachery, perhaps crime."

"Remember," answered the abbé, calmly, as he replaced the jewel and its case in the pocket of his cassock, "it is your fault, not mine, that I do so. You will have the goodness to furnish me with the address of both Fernand and Danglars, in order that I may execute Edmond's last wishes." The agitation of Caderousse became extreme, and large drops of perspiration rolled from his heated brows. As he saw the abbé rise from his seat and go towards the door, as though to ascertain if his horse were sufficiently refreshed to continue his journey, Caderousse and his wife exchanged looks of deep meaning with each other.

"There you see, wife," said the former, "this splendid diamond might all be ours, if we chose!"—"Do you believe it?"

"Why, surely a man of his holy profession would not deceive us!"

"Well," replied La Carconte, "do as you like. For my part, I wash my hands of the affair." So saying, she once more climbed the staircase leading to her chamber, her frame shuddering with aguish chills, and her teeth rattling in her head, spite of the intense heat of the weather. Arrived at the top stair, she turned round, and called out, in a warning tone, to her husband, "Gaspard, consider well what you are about to do!"—"I have both reflected and decided," answered he. La Carconte then entered her chamber, the flooring of which creaked beneath her heavy, uncertain tread, as she proceeded towards her arm-chair, into which she fell as though exhausted.

"Well," asked the abbé, as he returned to the apartment below, "what have you made up your mind to do?"

"To tell you all I know," was the reply.

"I certainly think you act wisely in so doing," said the priest. "Not because I have the least desire to learn anything you may desire to conceal from me, but simply that if, through your assistance, I could distribute the legacy according to the wishes of the testator, why, so much the better, that is all."—"I trust, indeed, such will be the case, and that poor Edmond's dying bequest will be given only to such as you shall be convinced are his faithful and attached friends," replied Caderousse, his eyes sparkling and his face flushed with the hope of obtaining all himself.

"Now, then, begin, if you please," said the abbé,—"I am all attention."—"Stop a minute," answered Caderousse; "we might be interrupted in the most interesting part of my recital, which would be a pity; and it is as well that your visit hither should be made known only to ourselves." With these words he went stealthily to the door, which he closed, and, by way of still greater precaution, bolted and barred it, as he was accustomed to do at night. During this time the abbé had chosen his place for listening to the painful recital he expected Caderousse's would prove. He removed his seat into a corner of the room, where he himself would be in deep shadow, while the light would be fully thrown on the narrator; then, with head bent down and hands clasped, or rather clenched together, he

prepared to give his whole attention to Caderousse, who seated himself on the little stool, exactly opposite to him.

"Remember, I did not urge you to this," said the trembling voice of La Carconte, as though through the flooring of her chamber she viewed the scene that was enacting below.

"Enough, enough!" replied Caderousse; "say no more about it; I will take all the consequences upon myself." He then commenced as follows.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RECITAL.

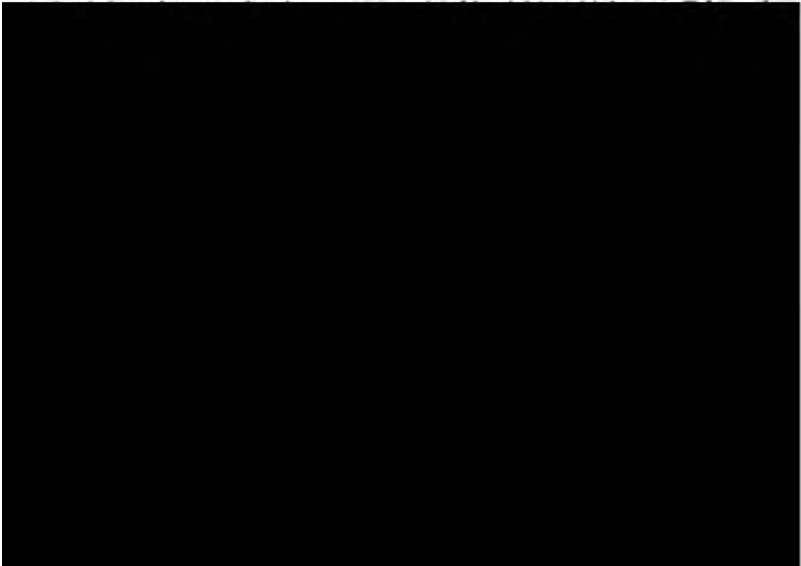
"FIRST," said Caderousse, "sir, you must make me a promise."

"What is that?" inquired the abbé.

"Why, if you ever make use of the details I am about to give you, that you will never let any one know that it was I who supplied them; for the persons of whom I am about to talk are rich and powerful, and if they only laid the tips of their fingers on me, I should break to pieces like glass."

"Make yourself easy, my friend," replied the abbé. "I am a priest, and confessions die in my breast. Recollect, our only desire is to carry out, in a fitting manner, the last wishes of our friend. Speak, then, without reserve, as without hatred; tell the truth, the whole truth; I do not know, never may know, the persons of whom you are about to speak; besides, I am an Italian, and not a Frenchman, and belong to God, and not to man; and I retire to my convent, which I have only quitted to fulfil the last wishes of a dying man." This last assurance seemed to give Caderousse courage.

"Well, then, under these circumstances," said Caderousse, "I will ;



broken, having past a sleepless night, and not touched food since the last day, she wished him to go with her that she might take care of but the old man would not consent. 'No,' was the old man's reply, 'not leave this house, for my poor dear boy loves me better than any man in the world; and if he gets out of prison he will come and see me the first thing, and what would he think if I did not wait here for him?' I saw all this from the window, for I was anxious that Mercédès should leave the old man to accompany her, for his footsteps over my head and day did not leave me a moment's repose."

"Did you not go upstairs and try to console the poor old man?" asked the abbé.—"Ah, sir," replied Caderousse, "we cannot console those who are ill not be consoled, and he was one of these; besides, I know not what he seemed to dislike seeing me. One night, however, I heard him sob, and I could not resist my desire to go up to him, but when I opened his door he was no longer weeping but praying: I cannot now tell you, sir, all the eloquent words and imploring language he made use of; it was more than piety, it was more than grief: and I, who am no Jesuit, and hate the Jesuits, said then to myself, 'It is really well, and I am very glad that I have not any children; for if I were a father and felt the excessive grief as the old man does, and did not find in my memory that all he is now saying, I should throw myself into the sea at once, and could not bear it.'"

"Or father!" murmured the priest.

From day to day he lived on alone, and more and more solitary. M. Morrel and Mercédès came to see him, but his door was closed; and, though I was certain he was at home he would not make any answer. At length, when, contrary to his custom, he had admitted Mercédès, and she, in spite of her own grief and despair, endeavoured to console him, he said to her,—'Be assured, my dear daughter, he is dead; and instead of expecting him, it is he who is awaiting us; I am quite happy, and I am the oldest, and of course shall see him first.' However well disposed a person may be, why you see we leave off after a time seeing persons who are in sorrow, they make one melancholy, and so at last old M. Morrel was left all to himself, and I only saw from time to time strangers come to him and come down again with some bundle they tried to hide; I guessed what these bundles were, and he sold by degrees what he needed to pay for his subsistence. At length, the poor old fellow reached the end of all he had; he owed three quarters' rent, and they threatened to turn him out; he begged for another week, which was granted to him. I know the cause the landlord came into my apartment when he left his. For the first days I heard him walking about as usual, but on the fourth I saw him no longer. I then resolved to go up to him at all risks. The door was closed, but I looked through the keyhole, and saw him so pale and emaciated, that believing him very ill, I went and told M. Morrel, and he came on to Mercédès. They both came immediately, M. Morrel engaged a doctor, and the doctor said it was an affection of the stomach, and ordered him a limited diet. I was there too, and I never shall forget Mercédès's smile at this prescription. From that time he opened his door, and he had an excuse for not eating any more, as the doctor had put him out. The abbé uttered a kind of groan. "The story interests you, does it not, sir?" inquired Caderousse.—"Yes," replied the abbé, "it is affecting."

Mercédès came again, and she found him so altered that she was even more anxious than before to have him taken to her own abode. This was

M. Morrel's wish also, who would fain have conveyed the old man against his consent ; but the old man resisted, and cried so, that they were actually frightened. Mercédès remained, therefore, by his bedside, and M. Morrel went away, making a sign to the Catalane that he had left his purse on the chimney-piece. But availing himself of the doctor's order, the old man would not take any sustenance ; at length (after nine days' despair and fasting), the old man died, cursing those who had caused his misery, and saying to Mercédès,—‘ If you ever see my Edmond again, tell him I die blessing him.’ ” The abbé rose from his chair, made two turns round the chamber, and pressed his trembling hand against his parched throat. “ And you believe he died——”

“ Of hunger, sir, of hunger,” said Caderousse. “ I am as certain of it as that we two are Christians.”

The abbé, with a shaking hand, seized a glass of water that was standing by him half-full, swallowed it at one gulp, and then resumed his seat with red eyes and pale cheeks. “ This was, indeed, a horrid event,” said he, in a hoarse voice.

“ The more so, sir, as it was men's and not God's doing.”——“ Tell me of those men,” said the abbé, “ and remember too,” he added, in a voice that was nearly menacing in its tone, “ you have promised to tell me everything. Tell me, therefore, who are these men who have killed the son with despair, and the father with famine?”——“ Two men jealous of him, sir ; one from love, and the other ambition,—Fernand and Danglars.”

“ Say, how was this jealousy manifested?”

“ They denounced Edmond as a Bonapartist agent.”

“ Which of the two denounced him ? Which was the real delinquent ?”

“ Both, sir ; one with a letter, and the other put it in the post.”

“ And where was this letter written ?”

“ At La Réserve, the day before the festival of the bath-tub.”

I confess I had my fears, in the state in which politics then were, and I held my tongue. It was cowardly, I confess, but it was not criminal."

"I comprehend—you allowed matters to take their course, that was all."

"—“Yes, sir,” answered Caderousse, “and my remorse preys on me night and day. I often ask pardon of God, I swear to you, because this action, the only one with which I have seriously to reproach myself in all my life, is no doubt the cause of my abject condition. I am expiating a moment of selfishness, and thus it is I always say to Carconte, when she complains, ‘Hold your tongue, woman; it is the will of God.’” And Caderousse bowed his head with every sign of real repentance.

“Well, sir,” said the abbé, “you have spoken unreservedly; and thus to accuse yourself is to deserve pardon.”——“Unfortunately, Edmond is dead, and has not pardoned me.”——“He was ignorant,” said the abbé.

“But he knows it all now,” interrupted Caderousse; “they say the dead know everything.” There was a brief silence; the abbé rose and paced up and down pensively, and then resumed his seat. “You have two or three times mentioned a M. Morrel,” he said; “who was he?”——“The owner of the *Pharaon* and patron of Dantès.”

“And what part did he play in this sad drama?” inquired the abbé.

“The part of an honest man, full of courage and real regard. Twenty times he interceded for Edmond. When the emperor returned, he wrote, implored, threatened, and so energetically, that on the second restoration he was persecuted as a Bonapartist. Ten times, as I told you, he came to see Dantès’ father, and offered to receive him in his own house; and the night or two before his death, as I have already said, he left his purse on the mantelpiece, with which they paid the old man’s debts, and buried him decently; and then Edmond’s father died, as he had lived, without doing harm to any one. I have the purse still by me—a large one, made of red silk.”

“And,” asked the abbé, “is M. Morrel still alive?”——“Yes,” replied Caderousse.

“In this case,” replied the abbé, “he should be rich, happy.” Caderousse smiled bitterly. “Yes, happy as myself,” said he.

“What! M. Morrel unhappy!” exclaimed the abbé.

“He is reduced almost to the last extremity—nay, he is almost at the point of dishonour.”——“How?”

“Yes,” continued Caderousse, “and in this way, after five-and-twenty, years of labour, after having acquired a most honourable name in the trade of Marseilles, M. Morrel is utterly ruined: he has lost five ships in two years, has suffered by the bankruptcy of three large houses, and his only hope now is in that very *Pharaon* which poor Dantès commanded, and which is expected from the Indies with a cargo of cochineal and indigo. If this ship founders, like the others, he is a ruined man.”——“And has the unfortunate man wife or children?” inquired the abbé.

“Yes, he has a wife, who in all this behaved like an angel; he has a daughter, who was about to marry the man she loved, but whose family how will not allow him to wed the daughter of a ruined man; he has, besides, a son, a lieutenant in the army; and, as you may suppose, all this, instead of soothing, doubles his grief. If he were alone in the world he would blow out his brains, and there would be an end.”

“Horrible!” ejaculated the priest.

“And it is thus Heaven recompenses virtue, sir,” added Caderousse. “You see, I, who never did a bad action but that I have told you of—am in destitution, after having seen my poor wife die of a fever, unable to

do anything in the world for her ; I shall die of hunger, as old Dantès did, whilst Fernand and Danglars are rolling in wealth."

"How is that?"—"Because all their malpractices have turned to luck, while honest men have been reduced to misery."

"What has become of Danglars, the instigator, and therefore the most guilty?"—"What has become of him? Why, he left Marseilles, and was taken, on the recommendation of M. Morrel, who did not know his crime, as cashier into a Spanish bank. During the war with Spain he was employed in the commissariat of the French army, and made a fortune ; then with that money he speculated in the funds, and trebled or quadrupled his capital ; and, having first married his banker's daughter, who left him a widower, he has married a second time, a widow, a Madame de Nargonne, daughter of M. de Servieux, the king's chamberlain, who is in high favour at court. He is a millionaire, and they have made him a count, and now he is Le Comte Danglars, with an hotel in the Rue de Mont Blanc, with ten horses in his stables, six footmen in his ante-chamber, and I know not how many hundreds of thousands in his strong-box."

"Ah !" said the abbé, with a peculiar tone, "he is happy."

"Happy ! who can answer for that? Happiness or unhappiness is the secret known but to one's self and the walls—walls have ears but no tongue ; but if a large fortune produces happiness, Danglars is happy."

"And Fernand?"—"Fernand ! why, that is another history."

"But how could a poor Catalan fisher-boy, without education or resources, make a fortune? I confess this staggers me."—"And it has staggered everybody. There must have been in his life some strange secret no one knows."

"But, then, by what visible steps has he attained this high fortune or high position?"

fact, rendered such services in this brief campaign that, after the taking of Trocadero, he was made colonel, and received the title of count and the cross of an officer of the Legion of Honour."

"Destiny ! destiny !" murmured the abbé.

"Yes, but listen ; this was not all. The war with Spain being ended, Fernand's career was checked by the long peace which seemed likely to endure throughout Europe. Greece only had risen against Turkey, and had begun her war of independence ; all eyes were turned towards Athens—it was the fashion to pity and support the Greeks. The French government, without protecting them openly, as you know, tolerated partial migrations. Fernand sought and obtained leave to go and serve in Greece, still having his name kept in the ranks of the army. Some time after, it was stated that the Comte de Morcerf (this was the name he bore) had entered the service of Ali Pacha with the rank of instructor-general. Ali Pacha was killed, as you know ; but before he died he recompensed the services of Fernand by leaving him a considerable sum, with which he returned to France, when his rank of lieutenant-general was confirmed."

"—So that now—" inquired the abbé.

"So that now," continued Caderousse, "he possesses a magnificent hotel—No. 27, Rue du Helder, Paris." The abbé opened his mouth, remained for a moment like a man who hesitates, then, making an effort over himself, he said, "And Mercédès—they tell me that she has disappeared ?"

"Disappeared," said Caderousse, "yes, as the sun disappears, to rise the next day with still more splendour."—"Has she made a fortune also ?" inquired the abbé, with an ironical smile.

"Mercédès is at this moment one of the greatest ladies in Paris," replied Caderousse.

"Go on," said the abbé ; "it seems as if I were hearing the recital of a dream. But I have seen things so extraordinary, that those you mention to me seem less astonishing."

"Mercédès was at first in the deepest despair at the blow which deprived her of Edmond. I have told you of her attempts to propitiate M. de Villefort, her devotion to the father of Dantès. In the midst of her despair, a fresh trouble overtook her. This was the departure of Fernand—of Fernand, whose crime she did not know, and whom she regarded as her brother. Fernand went, and Mercédès remained alone. Three months passed and found her all tears—no news of Edmond, no news of Fernand, nothing before her but an old man who was dying with despair. One evening, after having been seated, as was her custom, all day at the angle of two roads that lead to Marseilles from the Catalans, she returned to her home more depressed than ever : neither her lover nor her friend returned by either of these roads, and she had no intelligence of one or the other. Suddenly she heard a step she knew, turned round anxiously, the door opened, and Fernand, dressed in the uniform of a sub-lieutenant, stood before her. It was not the half that she bewailed, but it was a portion of her past life that returned to her. Mercédès seized Fernand's hands with a transport which he took for love, but which was only joy at being no longer alone in the world, and seeing at last a friend, after long hours of solitary sorrow. And then, it must be confessed, Fernand had never been hated—he was only not precisely loved. Another possessed all Mercédès' heart ; that other was absent, had disappeared, perhaps was dead. At this last idea Mercédès burst into a flood of tears, and wrung her hands in agony ; but this idea, which she had always repelled before when it

was suggested to her by another, came now in full force upon her mind ; and then, too, old Dantès incessantly said to her, ' Our Edmond is dead ; if he were not, he would return to us.' The old man died, as I have told you ; had he lived, Mercédès, perchance, had not become the wife of another, for he would have been there to reproach her infidelity. Fernand saw this, and when he learned the old man's death he returned. He was now a lieutenant. At his first coming he had not said a word of love to Mercédès ; at the second he reminded her that he loved her. Mercédès begged for six months more to expect and bewail Edmond."

"So that," said the abbé, with a bitter smile, "that makes eighteen months in all. What more could the most devoted lover desire?" Then he murmured the words of the English poet, "'Frailty, thy name is woman.'"

"Six months afterwards," continued Caderousse, "the marriage took place in the church of Accoules."—"The very church in which she was to have married Edmond," murmured the priest ; "there was only a change of bridegroom."

"Well, Mercédès was married," proceeded Caderousse ; "but although in the eyes of the world she appeared calm, she nearly fainted as she passed La Réserve, where, eighteen months before, the betrothal had been celebrated with him whom she would have seen she still loved had she looked at the bottom of her heart. Fernand, more happy, but not more at his ease—for I saw at this time he was in constant dread of Edmond's return—Fernand was very anxious to get his wife away, and to depart himself. There were too many dangers and recollections associated with the Catalans, and eight days after the wedding they left Marseilles."—

"Did you ever see Mercédès again?" inquired the priest.

"Yes, during the war of Spain, at Perpignan, where Fernand had left her ; she was attending to the education of her son." The abbé started

"And M. de Villefort?" asked the abbé.—"Oh, he never was a friend of mine, I did not know him, and I had nothing to ask of him."

"Do you not know what became of him, and the share he had in Edmond's misfortunes?"—"No; I only know that some time after having arrested him, he married Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran, and soon after left Marseilles; no doubt but he has been as lucky as the rest; no doubt he is as rich as Danglars, as high in station as Fernand. I only, as you see, have remained poor, wretched, and forgotten."

"You are mistaken, my friend," replied the abbé: "God may seem sometimes to forget for a while, whilst His justice reposes, but there always comes a moment when He remembers—and behold! a proof." As he spoke, the abbé took the diamond from his pocket, and giving it to Caderousse, said,—
"Here, my friend, take this diamond, it is yours."

"What! for me only?" cried Caderousse; "ah! sir, do not jest with me!"

"This diamond was to have been shared amongst his friends. Edmond had one friend only, and thus it cannot be divided. Take the diamond, then, and sell it: it is worth fifty thousand francs (£2,000), and I repeat my wish that this sum may suffice to release you from your wretchedness."

"Oh, sir," said Caderousse, putting out one hand timidly, and with the other wiping away the perspiration which bedewed his brow,—
"Oh, sir, do not make a jest of the happiness or despair of a man."

"I know what happiness and what despair are, and I never make a jest of such feelings. Take it, then, but in exchange——"

Caderousse, who touched the diamond, withdrew his hand. The abbé smiled. "In exchange," he continued, "give me the red silk purse that M. Morrel left on old Dantès' chimney-piece, and which you tell me is still in your hands." Caderousse, more and more astonished, went towards a large oaken cupboard, opened it, and gave the abbé a long purse of faded red silk, round which were two copper runners that had once been gilt. The abbé took it, and in return gave Caderousse the diamond.

"Oh! you are a man of God, sir," cried Caderousse; "for no one knew that Edmond had given you this diamond, and you might have kept it."

—"Which," said the abbé to himself, "you would have done." The abbé rose, took his hat and gloves. "Well," he said, "all you have told me is perfectly true, then, and I may believe it in every particular."—"See, M. l'Abbé," replied Caderousse, "in this corner is a crucifix in holy wood—here on this shelf is the gospel of my wife, open this book, and I will swear upon it with my hand on the crucifix. I will swear to you by my soul's salvation, my faith as a Christian, I have told everything to you as it occurred, and as the angel of men will tell it to the ear of God at the day of the last judgment!"

"'Tis well," said the abbé, convinced by his manner and tone that Caderousse spoke the truth. "'Tis well, and may this money profit you! Adieu! I go far from men who thus so bitterly injure each other." The abbé with difficulty got away from the enthusiastic thanks of Caderousse, opened the door himself, got out and mounted his horse, once more saluted the innkeeper, who kept uttering his loud farewells, and then returned by the road he had travelled in coming. When Caderousse turned round, he saw behind him La Carconte, paler and trembling more than ever. "Is, then, all that I have heard really true?" she inquired.—"What! that he has given the diamond to us only?" inquired Caderousse, half bewildered with joy.—"Yes!"—"Nothing more true! See! here it is." The

woman gazed at it a moment, and then said, in a gloomy voice, "Suppose it's false?" Caderousse started and turned pale. "False!" he muttered. "False! why should that man give me a false diamond?"—"To possess your secret without paying for it, you blockhead!"

Caderousse remained for a moment aghast under the weight of such an idea. "Oh!" he said, taking up his hat, which he placed on the red handkerchief tied round his head, "we will soon learn that."—"In what way?"—"Why it is the fair of Beaucaire, there are always jewellers from Paris there, and I will show it to them. Take care of the house, wife, and I shall be back in two hours." Caderousse left the house in haste, and ran rapidly in a direction contrary to that which the unknown had taken. "Fifty thousand francs!" muttered La Carconte, when left alone; "it is a large sum of money, but it is not a fortune."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PRISON REGISTER.

THE day after that on which the scene had passed on the road between Bellegarde and Beaucaire we have just related, a man of about thirty or two-and-thirty, dressed in a bright blue frock-coat, nankeen trousers, and a white waistcoat, having the appearance and accent of an Englishman, presented himself before the mayor of Marseilles. "Sir," said he, "I am chief clerk of the house of Thomson and French, of Rome. We are, and have been these ten years, connected with the house of Morrel and Son, of Marseilles. We have a hundred thousand francs (£4,000) or thereabouts engaged in speculation with them, and we are a little uneasy at reports that have reached us that the firm is on the eve of ruin. I have come, therefore, express from Rome to deliver you information as to this house."

a man in despair. I had two hundred thousand francs placed in the hands of Morrel and Son ; these two hundred thousand francs were my daughter's dowry, who was to be married in a fortnight, and these two hundred thousand francs were payable, half on the 15th of this month, and the other half on the 15th of next month. I had informed M. Morrel of my desire to have these payments punctually, and he has been here within the last half-hour to tell me that if his ship, the *Pharaon*, did not come into port on the 15th, he would be wholly unable to make this payment."

"But," said the Englishman, "this looks very much like a suspension of payments!"—"Say, sir, that it resembles a bankruptcy!" exclaimed M. de Boville, despairingly.

The Englishman appeared to reflect a moment, and then said,—“Thus, then, sir, this credit inspires you with considerable apprehensions?”—"To say truth, I consider it lost."

"Well, then, I will buy it of you!"—"You?"

"Yes, I!"—"But at a tremendous discount, of course?"

"No, for two hundred thousand francs. Our house," added the Englishman, with a laugh, "does not do things in that way."

"And you will pay——"

"Ready money." And the Englishman drew from his pocket a bundle of bank-notes, which might have been twice the sum M. de Boville feared to lose. A ray of joy passed across M. de Boville's countenance, yet he made an effort over himself, and said,—“Sir, I ought to tell you that, in all probability, you will not have six per cent. of this sum.”—"That's no affair of mine," replied the Englishman, "that is the affair of the house of Thomson and Frenching, in whose name I act. They have, perhaps, some motive to serve in hastening the ruin of a rival firm. But all I know, sir, is, that I am ready to hand you over this sum in exchange for your assignment of the debt. I only ask a brokerage."

"Of course, that is perfectly just," cried M. de Boville. "The commission is usually one and a half ; will you have two—three—five per cent., or even more? Say!"—"Sir," replied the Englishman, laughing, "I am like my house, and do not do such things—no, the commission I ask is quite different."

"Name it, sir, I beg."—"You are the inspector of prisons?"

"I have been so these fourteen years."

"You keep the registers of entries and departures?"—"I do."

"To these registers there are added notes relative to the prisoners?"

"There are special reports on every prisoner."—"Well, sir, I was educated at Rome by a poor devil of an abbé, who disappeared suddenly. I have since learned that he was confined in the Château d'If, and I should like to learn some particulars of his death."

"What was his name?"—"The Abbé Faria."

"Oh, I recollect him perfectly," cried M. de Boville ; "he was crazy."

"So they said."—"Oh, he was, decidedly."

"Very possibly, but what sort of madness was it?"

"He pretended to know of an immense treasure, and offered vast sums to government if they would liberate him."

"Poor devil ! and he is dead?"

"Yes, sir ; five or six months ago, last February."

"You have a good memory, sir, to recollect dates so well !"

"I recollect this, because the poor devil's death was accompanied by a singular circumstance."

"May I ask what that was?" said the Englishman, with an expression

of curiosity which a close observer would have been astonished at discovering in his phlegmatic countenance.—“Oh dear, yes, sir; the abbé’s dungeon was forty or fifty feet distant from that of an old agent of Bonaparte’s—one of those who had the most contributed to the return of the usurper in 1815, a very resolute and very dangerous man.”

“Indeed!” said the Englishman.

“Yes,” replied M. de Boville; “I myself had occasion to see this man in 1816 or 1817, and we could only go into his dungeon with a file of soldiers. That man made a deep impression on me; I shall never forget his countenance!” The Englishman smiled imperceptibly.—“And you say, sir,” he said, “that the two dungeons——”

“Were separated by a distance of fifty feet: but it appears that this Edmond Dantès——”

“This dangerous man’s name was——”

“Edmond Dantès. It appears, sir, that this Edmond Dantès had procured tools, or made them, for they found a passage by which the prisoners communicated.”

“This passage was formed, no doubt, with an intention of escape?”

“No doubt; but unfortunately for the prisoners, the Abbé Faria had an attack of catalepsy, and died.”

“That must have cut short the projects of escape.”

“For the dead man, yes,” replied M. de Boville, “but not for the survivor: on the contrary, this Dantès saw a means of accelerating his escape. He, no doubt, thought that prisoners who died in the Château d’If were interred in a burial-ground as usual, and he conveyed the dead man into his own cell, assumed his place in the sack in which they had sewn up the defunct, and awaited the moment of interment.”—“It was a bold step, and one that indicated some courage,” remarked the Englishman.

“As I have already told you, sir, he was a very dangerous man; and,

if he had any, might have some interest in knowing if he were dead or alive."—"So that now, if there were anything to inherit from him, they may do so with easy conscience. He is dead, and no mistake about it."

"Oh yes; and they may have the fact attested whenever they please."

"So be it," said the Englishman. "But to return to these registers."

"True, this story has diverted our attention from them. Excuse me."

"Excuse you for what? for the story? By no means: it really seems to me very curious."—"Yes, indeed. So, sir, you wish to see all relating to the poor abbé, who really was gentleness itself."

"Yes, you will much oblige me."—"Go into my study here, and I will show it to you." And they both entered M. de Boville's study. All was here arranged in perfect order; each register had its number, each file of paper its place. The inspector begged the Englishman to seat himself in an arm-chair, and placed before him the register and documents relative to the Château d'If, giving him all the time he desired to examine it, whilst De Boville seated himself in a corner, and began to read his newspaper. The Englishman easily found the entries relative to the Abbé Faria; but it seemed that the history which the inspector had related interested him greatly, for after having perused the first documents he turned over the leaves until he reached the deposition respecting Edmond Dantès. There he found everything arranged in due order—the denunciation, examination, Morrel's petition, M. de Villefort's marginal notes. He folded up the denunciation quietly, and put it as quietly in his pocket; read the examination, and saw that the name of Noirtier was not mentioned in it; perused, too, the application, dated 10th April, 1815, in which Morrel, by the deputy-procureur's advice, exaggerated with the best intentions (for Napoleon was then on the throne) the services Dantès had rendered to the imperial cause—services which Villefort's certificates rendered indispensable. Then he saw through all. This petition to Napoleon, kept back by Villefort, had become, under the second restoration, a terrible weapon against him in the hands of the *procureur du roi*. He was no longer astonished when he searched on to find in the register this note, placed in a bracket against his name:

EDMOND DANTÈS, { An inveterate Bonapartist; took an active part in the return from the Isle of Elba.
To be kept in complete solitary confinement, and to be strictly watched and guarded.

Beneath these lines was written, in another hand: "See note above—nothing can be done." He compared the writing in the bracket with the writing of the certificate placed beneath Morrel's petition, and discovered that the note in the bracket was the same writing as the certificate—that is to say, were in Villefort's handwriting. As to the note which accompanied this, the Englishman understood that it might have been added by some inspector, who had taken a momentary interest in Dantès' situation, but who had, from the remarks we have quoted, found it impossible to give any effect to the interest he experienced.

As we have said, the inspector, from discretion, and that he might not disturb the Abbé Faria's pupil in his researches, had seated himself in a corner, and was reading "Le Drapeau Blanc." He did not see the Englishman fold up and place in his pocket the denunciation written by Danglars under the arbour of La Réserve, and which had the post-mark of Marseilles, 2nd March, delivery 6 o'clock P.M. But it must be said that if he had seen it, he attached so small importance to this scrap of paper, and so great importance to his 200,000 francs, that he would not

have opposed what the Englishman did, how incorrect soever it might be.

"Thanks !" said the latter, closing the register with a noise, "I have all I want ; now it is for me to perform my promise. Give me a simple assignment of your debt ; acknowledge therein the receipt of the cash, and I will hand you over the money." He rose, gave his seat to M. de Boville, who took it without ceremony, quickly drew out the required assignment, whilst the Englishman was counting out the bank-notes on the other side of the desk.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HOUSE OF MORREL AND SON.

ANY one who had quitted Marseilles a few years previously, well acquainted with the interior of Morrel's house, and had returned at this date, would have found a great change. Instead of that air of life, of comfort, and of happiness that exhales from a flourishing and prosperous house—instead of the merry faces seen at the windows, of the busy clerks hurrying to and fro in the long corridors—instead of the court filled with bales of goods, re-echoing the cries and the jokes of the porters, he would have at once perceived an air of sadness and gloom. In the deserted corridor and the empty office, out of all the numerous clerks that used to fill the office, but two remained. One was a young man of three or four and twenty, who was in love with M. Morrel's daughter, and had remained with him, spite of the efforts of his friends to induce him to withdraw ; the other was an old one-eyed cashier, named Coclès, a nickname given him by the young men who used to inhabit this vast bee-hive, now almost deserted, and which had so completely replaced his real name that he would not, in all probability, have replied

was present, but his resources were now exhausted. A report, he reports afloat, was no longer to be had; and to meet the bill on the 15th of the present month to M. de Boville, and the bill on the 15th of the next month, M. Morrel had, in reality, no other resource than the return of the *Pharaon*, whose departure he had learnt from which had weighed anchor at the same time, and which had arrived in harbour. But this vessel, which, like the *Pharaon*, had arrived in Calcutta, had arrived a fortnight, whilst no intelligence had been received of the *Pharaon*.

It was the state of things when, the day after his interview with M. Morrel, the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson and French, of Paris, presented himself at M. Morrel's. Emmanuel received him; the young man, whom every fresh visage alarmed, for each fresh visage announced a fresh creditor, who, in his alarm, came to question the head of the house.

The young man, wishing to spare his employer the pain of seeing a new creditor, questioned the new comer; but the stranger declared he came to say to M. Emmanuel, and that his business was with him in person. Emmanuel sighed, and summoned Coclès. Coclès and the young man bade him conduct the stranger to M. Morrel's.

Coclès went first, and the stranger followed him. On the way they met a beautiful girl of sixteen or seventeen, who looked up at the stranger.

"M. Morrel is in his room, is he not, Mademoiselle Julie?" said the cashier. "I think so, at least," said the young girl, hesitatingly. "Go and announce to him that I am here," said the young man.

"Be useless to announce me, mademoiselle," returned the Englishman. "M. Morrel does not know my name; this worthy gentleman will announce the confidential clerk of the house of Thomson and French to you. I am, Rome, with whom your father does business."

The young girl turned pale, and continued to descend, whilst the cashier and Coclès continued to mount the staircase. She entered the room where Emmanuel was, whilst Coclès, by the aid of a key he possessed, opened a door in the corner of a landing-place on the second floor.

forced to fix his attention on an idea or a man. The Englishman looked at him with an air of curiosity, evidently mingled with interest. "Monsieur," said Morrel, whose uneasiness was increased by this examination, "you wish to speak to me."

"Yes, monsieur ; you are aware from whom I come ?"

"The house of Thomson and French ; at least, so my cashier tells me."

"He has told you rightly. The house of Thomson and French had 300,000 or 400,000 francs (£12,000 to £16,000) to pay this month in France; and, knowing your strict punctuality, have collected all the bills bearing your signature, and charged me as they became due to present them, and to employ the money otherwise." Morrel sighed deeply, and passed his hand over his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"So then, sir," said Morrel, "you hold bills of mine ?"

"Yes, and for a considerable sum."—"What is the amount ?" asked Morrel, with a voice he strove to render firm.

"Here is," said the Englishman, taking a quantity of papers from his pocket, "an assignment of 200,000 francs to our house by M. de Boville, the inspector of prisons, to whom they are due. You acknowledge, of course, you owe this sum to him ?"

"Yes ; he placed the money in my hands at four and a half per cent. nearly five years ago."—"When are you to pay ?"

"Half the 15th of this month, half the 15th of next."

"Just so ; and now here are 32,500 francs payable shortly ; they are all signed by you, and assigned to our house by the holders."

"I recognise them," said Morrel, whose face was suffused as he thought that, for the first time in his life, he would be unable to honour his own signature. "Is this all ?"—"No, I have for the end of the month these bills which have been assigned to us by the house of Pascal, and the house of Wild and Turner, of Marseilles, amounting to nearly 55,000

s cabin and came back with a brace of pistols. 'I will blow the brains out of the first man who leaves the pump,' said he."—"Well done!" said the Englishman.

"There's nothing gives you so much courage as good reasons," continued the sailor; "and during that time the wind had abated, and the sea one down, but the water kept rising; not much, only two inches an hour, but still it rose. Two inches an hour does not seem much, but in twelve hours that makes two feet, and three we had before, that makes five. Come," said the captain, 'we have done all in our power, and M. Morrel will have nothing to reproach us with; we have tried to save the ship, let us now save ourselves. To the boats, my lads, as quick as you can.' "Now," continued Penelon, "you see, M. Morrel, a sailor is attached to his ship, but still more to his life: so we did not wait to be told twice; the more so, that the ship was sinking under us, and seemed to say, Get along, save yourselves. We soon launched the boat, and all eight of us got into it."

The captain descended the last, or rather, he did not descend, he could not quit the vessel; so I took him round the waist, and threw him into the boat, and then I jumped after him. It was time, for just as I jumped the deck burst with a noise like the broadside of a man-of-war. Ten minutes after she pitched forward, then the other way, spun round and round, and then good-bye to the *Pharaon*. As for us, we were three days without anything to eat or drink, so that we began to think of drawing lots who should feed the rest, when we saw *La Gironde*; we made signals of distress, she perceived us, made for us, and took us all on board. There now, M. Morrel, that's the whole truth, on the honour of a sailor; is not it so, you fellows there?" A general murmur of approbation showed that the narrator had faithfully detailed their misfortunes and sufferings.

"Well, well," said M. Morrel, "I know there was no one in fault but destiny. It was the will of God that this should happen, blessed be His name. What wages are due to you?"

"Oh, don't let us talk of that, M. Morrel."

"On the contrary, let us speak of it."

"Well, then, three months," said Penelon.

"Coclès! pay 200 francs to each of these good fellows," said Morrel. At another time," added he, "I should have said, Give them, besides, 50 francs over as a present; but times are changed, and the little money at remains to me is not my own."

Penelon turned to his companions, and exchanged a few words with them.

"As for that, M. Morrel," said he, again turning his quid. "As for that——"

"As for what?"—"The money."—"Well——"

"Well, we all say that fifty francs will be enough for us at present, and at we will wait for the rest."—"Thanks, my friends, thanks!" cried Morrel, gratefully; "take it—take it; and if you can find another employer, enter his service; you are free to do so." These last words produced a prodigious effect on the seamen: Penelon nearly swallowed his quid; fortunately he recovered. "What! M. Morrel," said he, in a low voice, "you send us away; you are then angry with us?"

"No, no," said M. Morrel, "I am not angry; on the contrary, I do not send you away; but I have no more ships, and therefore I do not want any sailors."—"No more ships!" returned Penelon; "well, then, you'll find some; we'll wait for you."

"I have no money to build ships with, Penelon," said the poor owner,

mournfully, "so I cannot accept your kind offer."—"No more money! then you must not pay us; we can go, like the *Pharaon*, under bare poles."

"Enough! enough!" cried Morrel, almost overpowered; "leave me, I pray you; we shall meet again in a happier time. Emmanuel, accompany them, and see that my orders are executed."—"At least, we shall see each other again, M. Morrel?" asked Penelon.

"Yes; I hope so, at least. Now go." He made a sign to Coclès, who marched first; the seamen followed him, and Emmanuel brought up the rear. "Now," said the owner to his wife and daughter, "leave me; I wish to speak with this gentleman." And he glanced towards the clerk of Thomson and French, who had remained motionless in the corner during this scene, in which he had taken no part, except the few words we have mentioned. The two females looked at this person, whose presence they had entirely forgotten, and retired; but, as she left the apartment, Julie gave the stranger a supplicating glance, to which he replied by a smile that an indifferent spectator would have been surprised to see on his stern features. The two men were left alone. "Well, sir," said Morrel, sinking into a chair, "you have heard all, and I have nothing further to tell you."

"I see," returned the Englishman, "that a fresh and unmerited misfortune has overwhelmed you, and this only increases my desire to serve you."—"Oh, sir!" cried Morrel.

"Let me see," continued the stranger, "I am one of your largest creditors."—"Your bills, at least, are the first that will fall due."

"Do you wish for time to pay?"

"A delay would save my honour, and consequently my life."

"How long a delay do you wish for?" Morrel reflected. "Two months," said he.

baluster. The stranger waved his hand, and continued to descend. In the court he found Penelon, who, with a rouleau of a hundred francs in either hand, seemed unable to make up his mind to retain them. "Come with me, my friend," said the Englishman; "I wish to speak to you."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FIFTH OF SEPTEMBER.

THE delay afforded by the agent of the house of Thomson and French, at the moment when Morrel expected it least, appeared to the poor ship-owner one of those returns of good fortune which announce to a man that Fate is at length weary of wasting her spite upon him. The same day he related to his wife, to Emmanuel, and his daughter, what had occurred to him; and a ray of hope, if not tranquillity, returned to the family. Unfortunately, however, Morrel had not only engagements with the house of Thomson and French, who had shown themselves so considerate towards him; and, as he had said, in business he had correspondents, and not friends. When he reflected deeply, he could by no means account for this generous conduct on the part of Thomson and French towards him, and could only attribute it to the selfish reflection of the firm: "We had better support a man who owes us nearly 300,000 francs, and have those 300,000 francs at the end of three months than hasten his ruin, and have six or eight per cent. of capital." Unfortunately, whether from hate or blindness, all Morrel's correspondents did not reflect similarly; and some made even a contrary reflection. The bills signed by Morrel were thus presented at his office with scrupulous exactitude, and, thanks to the delay granted by the Englishman, were paid by Coclès with equal punctuality. Coclès thus remained in his accustomed tranquillity. It was Morrel alone who remembered with alarm, that if he had to repay on the 15th the 50,000 francs of M. de Boville, and on the 30th the 32,500 francs of bills, for which, as well as the debt due to the inspector of prisons, he had time granted, he must be a ruined man.

The opinion of all the commercial men was that, under the reverses which had successively weighed down Morrel, it was impossible for him to stand against it. Great, therefore, was the astonishment when they saw the end of the month come, and he fulfilled all his engagements with his usual punctuality. Still confidence was not restored to all minds, and the general voice postponed only until the end of the month the complete ruin of the unfortunate shipowner. The month passed amidst unheard-of efforts on the part of Morrel to get in all his resources. Formerly his paper, at any date, was taken with confidence, and was even in request. Morrel now tried to negotiate bills at ninety days only, and found all the banks closed. Fortunately Morrel had some moneys coming in on which he could rely; and, as they reached him, he found himself in a condition to meet his engagements when the end of July came. The agent of Thomson and French had not been again seen at Marseilles; the day after, or two days after, his visit to Morrel, he had disappeared; and as in that city he had had no intercourse but with the mayor, the inspector of prisons, and M. Morrel, his appearance left no other trace than the different remembrances of him which these three persons retained. As to the sailors of the *Pharaon*, it seemed that they must have found some engagement, for they had disappeared also.

Captain Gaumard, recovered from his illness, had returned from Palma. He hesitated to present himself at Morrel's, but the owner, hearing of his

arrival, went to him. The worthy shipowner knew, from Penelon's recital, of the captain's brave conduct during the storm, and tried to console him. He brought him also the amount of his wages, which Captain Gaumard had not dared to apply for. As he descended the staircase, Morrel met Penelon, who was going up. Penelon had, it would seem, made good use of his money, for he was newly clad: when he saw his employer, the worthy tar seemed much embarrassed, drew on one side into the corner of the landing-place, passed his quid from one cheek to the other, stared stupidly with his great eyes, and only acknowledged the squeeze of the hand which Morrel as usual gave him by a slight pressure in return. Morrel attributed Penelon's embarrassment to the elegance of his attire; it was evident the good fellow had not gone to such an expense on his own account; he was no doubt engaged on board some other vessel, and thus his bashfulness arose from the fact of his not having, if we may so express ourselves, worn mourning for the *Pharaon* longer. Perhaps, he had come to tell Captain Gaumard of his good luck, and to offer him employment from his new master. "Worthy fellow!" said Morrel, as he went away, "may your new master love you as I loved you, and be more fortunate than I have been!"

August rolled by in unceasing efforts on the part of Morrel to renew his credit or revive the old. On the 20th of August it was known at Marseilles that he had taken a place in the *malle-poste*, and then it was said that it was at the end of the month the docket was to be struck, and Morrel had gone away before, that he might not be present at this cruel act; but had left his chief clerk Emmanuel, and his cashier Coclès to meet it. But, contrary to all expectation, when the 31st of August came, the house opened as usual, and Coclès appeared behind the grating of the counter, examined all bills presented with the same scrutiny, and, from first to last, paid all with the same precision. There came in, moreover, two re-

Morrel, though hardly two-and-twenty, had great influence over his father. He was a strong-minded, upright young man. At the time when he decided on his profession his father had no desire to choose for him, but had consulted young Maximilian's taste. He had at once declared for a military life, and had in consequence studied hard, passed brilliantly through the *Ecole Polytechnique*, and left it as sub-lieutenant of the 53rd of the line. For a year he had held this rank, and expected promotion on the first vacancy. In his regiment, Maximilian Morrel was noted as the most rigid observer, not only of the obligations imposed on a soldier, but also of the duties of a man, and he thus gained the name of "the stoic." We need hardly say, that many of those who gave him this epithet repeated it because they had heard it, and did not even know what it meant. This was the young man whom his mother and sister called to their aid to sustain them under the grave circumstances which they felt they would soon have to endure. They had not mistaken the gravity of this event, for the moment after Morrel had entered his cabinet with Coclès, Julie saw the latter leave it pale, trembling, and his features betraying the utmost consternation. She would have questioned him as he passed by her, but the worthy creature hastened down the staircase with unusual precipitation, and only raised his hands to heaven and exclaimed, "O mademoiselle! mademoiselle! what a dreadful misfortune! Who could ever have believed it!" A moment afterwards Julie saw him go upstairs carrying two or three heavy ledgers, a pocket-book, and a bag of money.

Morrel examined the ledgers, opened the pocket-book, and counted the money. All his funds amounted to 6000 or 8000 francs, his expectancies up to the 5th to 4000 or 5000, which, making the best of everything, gave him 14,000 francs to meet bills amounting to 287,500 francs. He could not make such a proposal. However, when Morrel went down to his dinner, he appeared very composed. This calmness was more alarming to the two women than the deepest dejection would have been. After dinner Morrel usually went out, and used to take his coffee at the club of the Phocéens, and read the "*Semaphore*;" but this day he did not leave the house, but returned to his office.

As to Coclès, he seemed completely bewildered. For part of the day he went into the court-yard, seated himself on a stone with his head bare, and exposed to a sun of thirty degrees. Emmanuel tried to comfort the females, but his eloquence faltered. The young man was too well acquainted with the business of the house, not to feel that a great catastrophe hung over the Morrel family. Night came, the two women had watched, hoping that when he left his room Morrel would come to them, but they heard him pass before their door, and trying to conceal the noise of his footsteps. They listened; he went into his sleeping-room, and fastened the door inside. Madame Morrel sent her daughter to bed, and half an hour after Julie had retired, she rose, took off her shoes, and went stealthily along the passage, to see through the keyhole what her husband was doing. In the passage she saw a retreating shadow; it was Julie, who, uneasy herself, had anticipated her mother. The young lady went towards Madame Morrel,—"*He is writing,*" she said. They had understood each other without speaking. Madame Morrel looked again through the keyhole, Morrel was writing; but Madame Morrel remarked, what her daughter had not observed, that her husband was writing on stamped paper. The terrible idea that he was writing his will flashed across her; she shuddered, and yet had not strength to utter a word. Next day M. Morrel seemed as calm as ever, went into his office as usual, came to his

breakfast punctually, and then, after dinner, he placed his daughter beside him, took her head in his arms, and held her for a long time against his bosom. In the evening, Julie told her mother, that although so calm in appearance, she had remarked that her father's heart beat violently. The two next days passed almost similarly. On the evening of the 4th of September, M. Morrel asked his daughter for the key of his cabinet. Julie trembled at this request, which seemed to her of bad omen. Why did her father ask for this key which she always kept, and which was only taken from her in childhood as a punishment? The young girl looked at Morrel.

"What have I done wrong, father," she said, "that you should take this key from me?"—"Nothing, my dear," replied the unhappy man, the tears starting to his eyes at this simple question,—“nothing, only I want it.” Julie made a pretence to feel for the key. “I must have left it in my room,” she said. And she went out, but instead of going to her apartment she hastened to consult Emmanuel. “Do not give this key to your father,” said he, “and to-morrow morning, if possible, do not quit him for a moment.” She questioned Emmanuel, but he knew nothing, or would not say it if he did. During the night, between the 4th and 5th of September, Madame Morrel remained listening for every sound, and, until three o'clock in the morning, she heard her husband pacing the room in great agitation. It was three o'clock when he threw himself on the bed. The mother and daughter passed the night together. They had expected Maximilian since the previous evening. At eight o'clock in the morning Morrel entered their chamber. He was calm; but the agitation of the night was legible in his pale and careworn visage. They did not dare to ask him how he had slept. Morrel was kinder to his wife, more affectionate to his daughter, than he had ever been. He could not cease gazing at and kissing the sweet girl. Julie, mindful of Emmanuel's request, was following her father when he quitted the room, but he said to her, quickly,—“Remain with

the porter for the key of the room on the fifth floor, enter the apartment, take from the corner of the mantelpiece a purse netted in red silk, and give it to your father. It is important that he should receive it before eleven o'clock. You promised to obey me implicitly. Remember your oath.

"SINBAD THE SAILOR."

The young girl uttered a joyful cry, raised her eyes, looked round to question the messenger, but he had disappeared. She cast her eyes again over the note to peruse it a second time, and saw there was a postscript. She read :

"It is important that you should fulfil this mission in person and alone. If you go accompanied by any other person, or should any one else present themselves, the porter will reply that he does not know anything about it."

This postscript was a great check to the young girl's joy. Was there nothing to fear? was there not some snare laid for her? Her innocence had kept her in ignorance of the dangers that might assail a young girl of her age. But there is no need to know danger in order to fear it; indeed, it may be observed, that it is usually unknown perils that inspire the greatest terror.

Julie hesitated, and resolved to take counsel. Yet, by a singular feeling, it was neither to her mother nor her brother that she applied, but to Emmanuel. She hastened down and told him what had occurred on the day when the agent of the house of Thomson and French had come to her father's, related the scene on the staircase, repeated the promise she had made, and showed him the letter. "You must go, then, mademoiselle," said Emmanuel.

"Go there!" murmured Julie.

"Yes; I will accompany you."

"But did you not read that I must be alone?" said Julie.

"And you shall be alone," replied the young man. "I will await you at the corner of the Rue du Musée, and if you are so long absent as to make me uneasy, I will hasten to rejoin you, and woe to him of whom you shall have cause to complain to me!"

"Then, Emmanuel," said the young girl, with hesitation, "it is your opinion that I should obey this invitation?"—"Yes. Did not the messenger say your father's safety was in it?"

"But what danger threatens him, then, Emmanuel?" she asked.

Emmanuel hesitated a moment, but his desire to make Julie decide immediately made him reply :

"Listen," he said; "to-day is the 5th of September, is it not?"

"Yes."—"To-day, then, at eleven o'clock, your father has nearly 300,000 francs to pay?"

"Yes, we know that."—"Well, then," continued Emmanuel, "we have not 15,000 francs in the house."

"What will happen then?"—"Why, if to-day before eleven o'clock your father has not found some one who will come to his aid, he will be compelled at twelve o'clock to declare himself a bankrupt."

"Oh, come, then, come!" cried she, hastening away with the young man. During this time, Madame Morrel had told her son everything. The young man knew quite well that, after the succession of misfortunes which had befallen his father, great changes had taken place in the style of living and housekeeping; but he did not know that matters had reached

such a point. He was thunderstruck. Then, rushing hastily out of the apartment, he ran upstairs, expecting to find his father in his cabinet, but he rapped there in vain. Whilst he was yet at the door of the cabinet he heard the bedroom-door open, turned, and saw his father. Instead of going direct to his cabinet, M. Morrel had returned to his bedchamber, which he was only this moment quitting. Morrel uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of his son, of whose arrival he was ignorant. He remained motionless on the spot, pressing with his left hand something he had concealed under his coat. Maximilian sprang down the staircase, and threw his arms round his father's neck ; but suddenly he recoiled, and placed his right hand on Morrel's breast. "Father !" he exclaimed, turning pale as death, "what are you going to do with the brace of pistols under your coat ?"

"Oh, this is what I feared !" said Morrel.

"Father, father ! in Heaven's name," exclaimed the young man, "what are these weapons for ?"—"Maximilian," replied Morrel, looking fixedly at his son, "you are a man, and a man of honour. Come, and I will explain to you."

And with a firm step Morrel went up to his cabinet, whilst Maximilian followed him, trembling as he went. Morrel opened the door, and closed it behind his son ; then, crossing the ante-room, went to his desk, on which he placed the pistols, and pointed with his finger to an open ledger. In this ledger was made out an exact balance-sheet of affairs. Morrel had to pay, within half-an-hour, 287,500 francs. All he possessed was 15,257 francs. "Read !" said Morrel.

The young man was overwhelmed as he read. Morrel said not a word. What could he say ? What need he add to such a desperate proof in figures ? "And have you done all that is possible, father, to meet this disastrous result ?" asked the young man, after a moment's pause. "I have," replied Morrel.

kissing his forehead several times, said, "Oh, yes, yes, I bless you in my own name, and in the name of three generations of irreproachable men, who say by my voice, 'The edifice which misfortune has destroyed, Providence may build up again.' On seeing me die such a death, the most inexorable will have pity on you. To you, perhaps, they will accord the time they have refused to me. Try that the word of disgrace be never pronounced; go to work, labour, young man, struggle ardently and courageously; live, yourself, your mother and sister, with the most rigid economy, so that from day to day the property of those whom I leave in your hands may augment and fructify. Reflect how glorious a day it will be, how grand, how solemn, that day of complete restoration, on which you will say in this very office, 'My father died because he could not do what I have this day done; but he died calmly and peaceably, because in dying he knew what I should do.'"

"My father! my father!" cried the young man, "why should you not live?"—"If I live, all would be changed; if I live, interest would be converted into doubt, pity into hostility; if I live, I am only a man who has broken his word, failed in his engagements—in fact, only a bankrupt. If, on the contrary, I die, remember, Maximilian, my corpse is that of an honest but unfortunate man. Living, my best friends would avoid my house; dead, all Marseilles will follow me in tears to my last home. Living, you would feel shame at my name; dead, you may raise your head and say, 'I am the son of him you killed, because, for the first time, he has been compelled to fail in his word.'"

The young man uttered a groan, but appeared resigned.

"And now," said Morrel, "leave me alone, and endeavour to keep your mother and sister away."—"Will you not see my sister once more?" asked Maximilian. A last but final hope was concealed by the young man in the effect of this interview, and therefore he had suggested it. Morrel shook his head. "I saw her this morning, and bade her adieu."

"Have you no particular commands to leave with me, my father?" inquired Maximilian, in a faltering voice.

"Yes, my son, and a sacred command."—"Say it, my father."

"The house of Thomson and French is the only one who, from humanity, or, it may be, selfishness—it is not for me to read men's hearts—have had any pity for me. His agent, who will in ten minutes present himself to receive the amount of a bill of 287,500 francs, I will not say granted, but offered me three months. Let this house be the first repaid, my son, and respect this man."—"Father, I will," said Maximilian.

"And now, once more, adieu," said Morrel. "Go, leave me; I would be alone. You will find my will in the *secrétaire* in my bedroom."

The young man remained standing and motionless, having but the force of will and not the power of execution.

"Hear me, Maximilian," said his father. "Suppose I was a soldier like you, and ordered to carry a certain redoubt, and you knew I must be killed in the assault, would you not say to me, as you said just now, 'Go, father; for you are dishonoured by delay, and death is preferable to shame!'"

"Yes, yes!" said the young man, "yes;" and once again embracing his father with convulsive pressure, he said, "Be it so, my father."

And he rushed out of the cabinet. When his son had left him, Morrel remained an instant standing with his eyes fixed on the door; then putting forth his arm, he pulled the bell. After a moment's interval, Coclès appeared.

It was no longer the same man—the fearful convictions of the three last

days had crushed him. This thought—the house of Morrel is about to stop payment—bent him to the earth more than twenty years would otherwise have done.

“My worthy Coclès,” said Morrel, in a tone impossible to describe, “do you remain in the antechamber. When the gentleman who came three months ago—the agent of the house of Thomson and French—arrives, announce his arrival to me.” Coclès made no reply ; he made a sign with his head, went into the ante-room, and seated himself. Morrel fell back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the clock : there were seven minutes left, that was all. The hand moved on with incredible rapidity ; it seemed to him as if he saw it progress.

What then passed, at this final moment of time, in the mind of this man, who, still young, by a course of reasoning, false perhaps, but at least specious, was about to separate himself from all he loved in the world, and quit life, which possessed for him all domestic delights, it is impossible to express. To form the slightest idea of his feelings, he must have been seen with his brow bathed in perspiration, yet resigned ; his eyes moistened with tears, and yet raised to heaven. The clock hand moved on ; the pistols were cocked ; he stretched forth his hand, took one up, and murmured his daughter’s name. Then he laid down the mortal weapon, took up his pen, and wrote a few words. It seemed to him as if he had not taken a sufficient farewell of his beloved daughter. Then he turned again to the clock : he no longer counted by minutes, but by seconds. He took up the deadly weapon again, his mouth half-opened and his eyes fixed on the clock, and then shuddered at the click of the trigger as he cocked the pistol. At this moment of mortal agony, a damp colder than death passed over his brow, an agony stronger than death clutched at his heart-strings. He heard the door of the staircase creak on its hinges—the clock gave its warning to strike eleven—the door of his cabinet opened ; Morrel did not

when I returned."—"Monsieur Morrel!" exclaimed a voice on the stairs—"Monsieur Morrel!"

"It is his voice!" said Julie. At this moment Emmanuel entered, his countenance full of animation and joy. "The *Pharaon*!" he cried; "the *Pharaon*!"

"What!—what! the *Pharaon*! Are you mad, Emmanuel? You know the vessel is lost."—"The *Pharaon*, sir—they signal the *Pharaon*! The *Pharaon* is entering the harbour!" Morrel fell back in his chair, his strength was failing him; his understanding, weakened by such events, refused to comprehend such incredible, unheard-of, fabulous facts. But his son came in. "Father!" cried Maximilian, "how could you say the *Pharaon* was lost? The watch-tower has signalled her, and they say she is now coming into port."

"My dear friends!" said Morrel, "if this were so, it must be a miracle of Heaven! Impossible! impossible!"

But what was real and not less incredible was the purse he held in his hand, the acceptance receipted—the splendid diamond.

"Ah! sir," exclaimed Coclès, "what can it mean?—the *Pharaon*?"

"Come, my dear," said Morrel, rising from his seat, "let us go and see, and Heaven have pity upon us if it be false intelligence!" They all went out, and on the stairs met Madame Morrel, who had been afraid to go up into the cabinet. In an instant they were at the Cannebière. There was a crowd on the pier. All the crowd gave way before Morrel. "The *Pharaon*! the *Pharaon*!" said every voice.

And, wonderful to say, in front of the tower of Saint-Jean, was a ship bearing on her stern these words, printed in white letters, "The *Pharaon*, Morrel and Son, of Marseilles." It was precisely resembling the other *Pharaon*, and loaded, as that had been, with cochineal and indigo. It cast anchor, brailed all sails, and on the deck was Captain Gaumard giving orders, and Maître Penelon making signals to M. Morrel. To doubt any longer was impossible; there was the evidence of the senses, and ten thousand persons who came to corroborate the testimony. As Morrel and his son embraced on the pier-head, in the presence and applause of the whole city witnessing this prodigy, a man with his face half-covered by a black beard, and who, concealed behind the sentry-box, watched the scene with delight, uttered these words in a low tone, "Be happy, noble heart, be blessed for all the good thou hast done and wilt do hereafter, and let my gratitude rest in the shade with your kindness."

And with a smile in which joy and happiness were revealed, he left his hiding-place, and without being observed, descended one of those flights of steps which serve for debarkation, and hailing three times, shouted "Jacopo! Jacopo! Jacopo!" Then a shallop came to shore, took him on board, and conveyed him to a yacht splendidly fitted up, on whose deck he sprung with the activity of a sailor; thence he once again looked towards Morrel, who, weeping with joy, was shaking hands most cordially with all the crowd around him, and thanking with a look the unknown benefactor whom he seemed to be seeking in the skies. "And now," said the unknown, "farewell kindness, humanity, and gratitude! Farewell to all the feelings that expand the heart! I have been Heaven's substitute to recompense the good—now the god of vengeance yields to me his power to punish the wicked!" At these words he gave a signal, and, as if only awaiting this signal, the yacht instantly put out to sea.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ITALY : SINBAD THE SAILOR.

TOWARDS the commencement of the year 1838, two young men belonging to the first society of Paris, the Viscount Albert de Morcerf and the Baron Franz d'Epinay, were at Florence. They had agreed to see the Carnival at Rome that year, and that Franz, who for the last three or four years had inhabited Italy, should act as *cicerone* to Albert. As it is no inconsiderable affair to spend the Carnival at Rome, especially when you have no great desire to sleep on the Place du Peuple, or the Campo Vaccino, they wrote to Maître Pastrini, the proprietor of the Hôtel de Londres, Place d'Espagne, to reserve comfortable apartments for them. Maître Pastrini replied that he had only two rooms and a cabinet *al secondo piano*, which he offered at the low charge of a louis per diem. They accepted his offer ; but wishing to make the best use of the time that was left, Albert started for Naples. As for Franz, he remained at Florence. After having passed several days here, when he had walked in the Eden called the Casines, when he had passed two or three evenings at the houses of the nobles of Florence, he took a fancy into his head, after having already visited Corsica, the cradle of Bonaparte, to visit Elba, the halting-place of Napoleon.

One evening he loosened a barque from the iron ring that secured it to the port of Leghorn, laid himself down, wrapped in his cloak, at the bottom, and said to the crew,—“To the isle of Elba !” The barque shot out of the harbour like a bird, and the next morning Franz disembarked at Porto Ferrajo. He traversed the island, after having followed the traces which the footsteps of the giant have left, and re-embarked for Marciana. Two hours after he again landed at Pianosa, where he was assured red partridges abounded. The sport was bad : Franz only suc-

the affirmative, the sailors exchanged a few words together in a low tone. "Well!" asked he, "what! is there any difficulty to be surmounted?"—"No," replied the captain, "but we must warn your excellency that the island is contumacious."

"What do you mean?"—"That Monte-Cristo, although uninhabited, yet serves occasionally as a refuge for the smugglers and pirates who come from Corsica, Sardinia, and Africa, and that if anything betrays that we have been there, we shall have to perform quarantine for six days on our return to Leghorn."

"The devil! that is quite another thing; rather a long time too."

"But who will say your excellency has been to Monte-Cristo?"

"Oh, I shall not," cried Franz.

"Nor I, nor I," chorused the sailors.

"Then steer for Monte-Cristo."

The captain gave his orders, the helm was put up, and the barque was soon sailing in the direction of the island. Franz waited until all was finished, and when the sail was filled, and the four sailors had taken their places—three forward, and one at the helm—he resumed the conversation. "Gaetano," said he to the captain, "you tell me Monte-Cristo serves as a refuge for pirates, who are, it seems to me, a very different kind of game from the goats."—"Yes, your excellency, and it is true."

"I knew there were smugglers, but I thought that since the capture of Algiers, and the destruction of the regency, pirates only existed in the romances of Cooper and Captain Marryat."

"Your excellency is mistaken; there are pirates, like the bandits who were believed to have been exterminated by Pope Leo XII., and who yet every day rob travellers at the gates of Rome. Has not your excellency heard that the French *chargé d'affaires* was robbed six months ago within five hundred paces of Velletri?"

"Oh yes, I heard that."—"Well, then, if, like us, your excellency lived at Leghorn, you would hear, from time to time, that a little merchant vessel, or an English yacht that was expected at Bastia, at Porto Ferrajo, or at Civita Vecchia, has not arrived; no one knows what has become of it, but, doubtless, it has struck on a rock and foundered. Now this rock it has met has been a long and narrow boat, manned by six or eight men, who have surprised and plundered it, some dark and stormy night, near some desert and gloomy isle, as bandits plunder a carriage at the corner of a wood."

"But," asked Franz, who lay wrapped in his cloak at the bottom of the barque, "why do not those who have been plundered complain to the French, Sardinian, or Tuscan governments?"

"Why?" said Gaetano, with a smile.

"Yes, why?"—"Because, in the first place, they transfer from the vessel to their own boat whatever they think worth taking, then they bind the crew hand and foot, they attach to every one's neck a four-and-twenty pound ball, a large hole is pierced in the vessel's bottom, and then they leave her. At the end of ten minutes the vessel begins to roll, labour, and then sink; then one of the sides plunges and then the other; it rises and sinks again; suddenly a noise like the report of a cannon is heard—it is the air blowing up the deck; soon the water rushes out of the scupper-holes like a whale spouting, the vessel gives a last groan, spins round and round, and disappears, forming a vast whirlpool in the ocean, and then all is over; so that in five minutes nothing but the eye of God can see the vessel where she lies at the bottom of the sea. Do you understand now?"

said the captain, "why no complaints are made to the government, and why the vessel does not arrive at the port?"

It is probable that if Gaetano had related this previous to proposing the expedition, Franz would have hesitated ere he accepted it, but now that they had started, he thought it would be cowardly to draw back. He was one of those men who do not rashly court danger, but if danger presents itself, combat it with the most unalterable *sang froid*—he was one of those calm and resolute men who look upon a danger as an adversary in a duel, who, calculating his movements, study his attacks; who retreat sufficiently to take breath, but not to appear cowardly; who, understanding all their advantages, kill at a single blow. "Bah!" said he, "I have travelled through Sicily and Calabria—I have sailed two months in the Archipelago, and yet I never saw even the shadow of a bandit or a pirate."

"I did not tell your excellency this to deter you from your project," replied Gaetano, "but you questioned me, and I have answered; that's all."

"Yes, and your conversation is most interesting; and as I wish to enjoy it as long as possible, steer for Monte-Cristo."

The wind blew strongly, the barque sailed six or seven knots an hour, and they were rapidly reaching the end of their voyage. As they approached the isle became larger, and they could already distinguish the rocks heaped on one another, like bullets in an arsenal, in whose crevices they could see the green bushes and trees that were growing. As for the sailors, although they appeared perfectly tranquil, yet it was evident that they were on the alert, and that they carefully watched the glassy surface over which they were sailing, and on which a few fishing-boats, with their white sails, were alone visible. They were within fifteen miles of Monte-Cristo when the sun began to set behind Corsica, whose mountains appeared against the sky, and showing their rugged peaks in bold relief; this mass of stones, like the giant Adamastor, rose threateningly before the barque, from which it

"But this fire?" continued Franz. "It seems to me rather to assure than alarm us: men who did not wish to be seen would not light a fire."—"Oh, that goes for nothing," said Gaetano. "If you can guess the position of the isle in the darkness, you will see that the fire cannot be seen from the side, or from Pianoso, but only from the sea."

"You think, then, that this fire announces unwelcome neighbours?"

"That is what we must ascertain," returned Gaetano, fixing his eyes on this terrestrial star.

"How can you ascertain?"—"You shall see." Gaetano consulted with his companions, and after five minutes' discussion a manoeuvre was executed which caused the vessel to tack about, they returned the way they had come, and in a few minutes the fire disappeared, hidden by a rise in the land. The pilot again changed the course of the little barque, which rapidly approached the isle, and was soon within fifty paces of it. Gaetano lowered the sail, and the barque remained stationary. All this was done in silence, and since their course had been changed, not a word was spoken.

Gaetano, who had proposed the expedition, had taken all the responsibility on himself; the four sailors fixed their eyes on him, whilst they prepared their oars and held themselves in readiness to row away, which, thanks to the darkness, would not be difficult. As for Franz, he examined his arms with the utmost coolness; he had two double-barrelled guns and a rifle; he loaded them, looked at the locks, and waited quietly. During this time the captain had thrown off his vest and shirt, and secured his trousers round his waist; his feet were naked, so he had no shoes and stockings to take off; after these preparations he placed his finger on his lips, and lowering himself noiselessly into the sea, swam towards the shore with such precaution that it was impossible to hear the slightest sound; he could only be traced by the phosphorescent line in his wake. This track soon disappeared; it was evident that he had touched the shore. Every one on board remained motionless during half an hour, when the same luminous track was again observed, and in two strokes he had regained the barque. "Well!" exclaimed Franz and the sailors all together.

"They are Spanish smugglers," said he; "they have with them two Corsican bandits."—"And what are these Corsican bandits doing here with Spanish smugglers?"

"Alas!" returned the captain, with an accent of the most profound pity, "we ought always to help one another. Very often the bandits are hard pressed by gendarmes or carabineers; well, they see a barque, and good fellows like us on board, they come and demand hospitality of us; you can't refuse help to a poor hunted devil; we receive them, and for greater security we stand out to sea. This costs us nothing, and saves the life, or at least the liberty, of a fellow-creature, who on the first occasion returns the service by pointing out some safe spot where we can land our goods without interruption."

"Ah!" said Franz, "then you are a smuggler occasionally, Gaetano?"—"Your excellency, we must live somehow," returned the other, smiling in a way impossible to describe.

"Then you know the men who are now on Monte-Cristo?"—"Oh, yes, we sailors are like freemasons, and recognise each other by signs."

"And do you think we have nothing to fear if we land?"

"Nothing at all! smugglers are not thieves."

"But these two Corsican bandits?" said Franz, calculating the chances of peril.

"It is not their faults that they are bandits, but that of the authorities."

"How so?"—"Because they are pursued for having made a *peau*, as if it was not in a Corsican's nature to revenge himself."

"What do you mean by having made a *peau*?—having assassinated a man?" said Franz, continuing his investigation.—"I mean that they have killed an enemy, which is a very different thing," returned the captain.

"Well," said the young man, "let us demand hospitality of these smugglers and bandits. Do you think they will grant it?"

"Without doubt."—"How many are they?"

"Four, and the two bandits make six."

"Just our number, so that if they prove troublesome, we shall be able to check them; so, for the last time, steer to Monte-Cristo."

"Yes, but your excellency will permit us to take all due precautions."

"By all means, be as wise as Nestor and as prudent as Ulysses; I do more than permit, I exhort you."—"Silence, then!" said Gaetano.

Every one obeyed. For a man who, like Franz, viewed his position in its true light, it was a grave one. He was alone in the darkness with sailors whom he did not know, and who had no reason to be devoted to him; who knew that he had in his belt several thousand francs, and who had often examined his arms, which were very beautiful, if not with envy, at least with curiosity. On the other hand, he was about to land, without any other escort than these men, on an island whose name was religious, but which did not seem to Franz likely to afford him much hospitality, thanks to the smugglers and bandits. The history of the scuttled vessels, which had appeared improbable during the day, seemed very probable at night; placed as he was between two imaginary dangers, he did not quit the crew with his eyes, or his gun with his hand. However, the sailors had again hoisted the sail, and the vessel was once more cleaving the waves. Through the darkness Franz, whose eyes were now more accus-

disappeared returned suddenly, on the opposite side to that by which he had left ; he made a sign with his head to the sentinel, who, turning to the barque, uttered these words, "*S'accomodi.*" The Italian *s'accomodi* is untranslatable ; it means at once, "Come, enter, you are welcome ; make yourself at home ; you are the master." It is like that Turkish phrase of Molière's that so astonished *le bourgeois gentilhomme* by the number of things it contained. The sailors did not wait for a second invitation ; four strokes of the oar brought them to the land ; Gaetano sprang to shore, exchanged a few words with the sentinel, then his comrades descended, and lastly came Franz's turn. One of his guns was swung over his shoulder, Gaetano had the other, and a sailor held his rifle ; his dress, half artist, half dandy, did not excite any suspicion, and, consequently, no inquietude. The barque was moored to the shore, and they advanced a few paces to find a comfortable bivouac ; but, doubtless, the spot they chose did not suit the smuggler who filled the post of sentinel, for he cried out, "Not that way, if you please."

Gaetano faltered an excuse, and advanced to the opposite side, whilst two sailors kindled torches at the fire to light them on their way. They advanced about thirty paces, and then stopped at a small esplanade, surrounded with rocks, in which seats had been cut, not unlike sentry-boxes. Around in the crevices of the rocks grew a few dwarf oaks and thick bushes of myrtles. Franz lowered a torch, and saw, by the light of a mass of cinders, that he was not the first to discover this retreat, which was, doubtless, one of the halting-places of the wandering visitors of Monte-Cristo. As for his anticipation of events, once on *terra firma*, once that he had seen the indifferent, if not friendly, appearance of his hosts, his pre-occupation had disappeared, or rather, at sight of the goat, had turned to appetite. He mentioned this to Gaetano, who replied that nothing could be more easy than to prepare a supper when they had in their boat bread, wine, half a dozen partridges, and a good fire to roast them by. "Besides," added he, "if the smell of their roast meat tempts you, I will go and offer them two of our birds for a slice."

"You seem born for negotiation," returned Franz ; "go and try."

During this time the sailors had collected dried sticks and branches, with which they made a fire. Franz waited impatiently, smelling the odour of the goat, when the captain returned with a mysterious air.—"Well," said Franz, "anything new?—do they refuse?"—"On the contrary," returned Gaetano, "the chief, who was told you were a young Frenchman, invites you to sup with him."

"Well," observed Franz, "this chief is very polite, and I see no objection—the more so as I bring my share of the supper."—"Oh, it is not that—he has plenty, and to spare, for supper ; but he attaches a singular condition to your presentation at his house."

"His house ! has he built one here, then ?"

"No, but he has a very comfortable one, all the same, so they say."

"You know this chief, then ?"—"I have heard talk of him."

"Ill or well?"—"Both."

"The devil !—and what is this condition ?"

"That you are blindfolded, and do not take off the bandage until he himself bids you." Franz looked at Gaetano, to see, if possible, what he thought of this proposal. "Ah," replied he, guessing Franz's thought, "I know this merits reflection."

"What should you do in my place ?"

"I, who have nothing to lose, I should go."

"You would accept?"—"Yes, were it only out of curiosity."

"There is something very curious about this chief, then?"

"Listen," said Gaetano, lowering his voice, "I do not know if what they say is true——" He stopped to look if any one was near.

"What do they say?"

"That this chief inhabits a cavern to which the Pitti Palace is nothing."

"What nonsense!" said Franz, reseating himself.

"It is no nonsense; it is quite true. Cama, the pilot of the Saint Ferdinand, went in once, and he came back amazed, vowing that such treasures were only to be heard of in fairy tales."—"Do you know," observed Franz, "that with such stories you would make me enter the enchanted cavern of Ali Baba?"

"I tell you what I have been told."—"Then you advise me to accept?"

"Oh, I don't say that; your excellency will do as you please; I should be sorry to advise you in the matter." Franz reflected a few moments, felt that a man so rich could not have any intention of plundering him of what little he had, and seeing only the prospect of a good supper, he accepted. Gaetano departed with the reply. Franz was prudent, and wished to learn all he possibly could concerning his host. He turned towards the sailor, who, during this dialogue, had sat gravely plucking the partridges with the air of a man proud of his office, and asked him how these men had landed, as no vessel of any kind was visible.

"Never mind that," returned the sailor, "I know their vessel."

"Is it a very beautiful vessel?"

"I would not wish for a better to sail round the world."

"Of what burden is she?"—"About a hundred tons; but she is built to stand any weather. She is what the English call a yacht."

"Where was she built?"

Nights."—"His excellency waits for you," said a voice, which he recognised as that of the sentinel. He was accompanied by two of the yacht's crew. Franz drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and presented it to the man who had spoken to him. Without uttering a word, they bandaged his eyes with a care that showed their apprehensions of his committing some indiscretion. Afterwards he was made to promise he would not make the least attempt to raise the bandage. He promised. Then his two guides took his arms, and he advanced, guided by them, and preceded by the sentinel. After advancing about thirty paces, he smelt the appetising odour of the kid that was roasting, and knew thus that he was passing the bivouac; they then led him on about fifty paces farther, evidently advancing towards the shore, where they would not allow Gaetano to penetrate—a refusal he could now comprehend. Presently, by a change in the atmosphere, he comprehended that they were entering a cave; after going on for a few seconds more he heard a crackling, and it seemed to him as though the atmosphere again changed, and became balmy and perfumed. At length his feet touched on a thick and soft carpet, and his guides let go their hold of him. There was a moment's silence, and then a voice, in excellent French, although with a foreign accent, said: "Welcome, sir. I beg you will remove your bandage." It may be supposed, then, Franz did not wait for a repetition of this permission, but took off the handkerchief, and found himself in the presence of a man, from thirty-eight to forty years of age, dressed in a Tunisian costume—that is to say, a red cap with a long blue silk tassel, a vest of black cloth embroidered with gold, pantaloons of deep red, large and full gaiters of the same colour, embroidered with gold, like the vest, and yellow slippers; he had a splendid cachemire round his waist, and a small sharp and crooked cangiar was passed through his girdle. Although of a paleness that was almost livid, this man had a remarkably handsome face; his eyes were penetrating and sparkling; a nose, quite straight and projecting direct from the brow, gave out the Greek type in all its purity, whilst his teeth, as white as pearls, were set off to admiration by the black moustache that encircled them.

This pallor was so peculiar, that it seemed as though it were that which would be exhibited by a man who had been enclosed for a long time in a tomb, and who was unable to resume the healthy glow and hue of the living. He was not particularly tall, but extremely well made, and, like the men of the south, had small hands and feet. But what astonished Franz, who had treated Gaetano's description as a fable, was the splendour of the apartment in which he found himself. The entire chamber was lined with crimson brocade, worked with flowers of gold. In a recess was a kind of divan, surmounted with a stand of Arabian swords in silver scabbards, and the handles resplendent with gems; from the ceiling hung a lamp of Venice glass, of beautiful shape and colour, whilst the feet rested on a Turkey carpet, in which they sunk to the instep; tapestry hung before the door by which Franz had entered, and also in front of another door, leading into a second apartment, which seemed to be brilliantly lighted up. The host gave Franz time for his surprise, and, moreover, rendered him look for look, not even taking his eyes off him. "Sir," he said, after some pause, "a thousand excuses for the precaution taken in your introduction hither; but as, during the greater portion of the year, this island is deserted, if the secret of this abode were discovered, I should, doubtless, find on my return my temporary retirement in a state of great disorder, which would be exceedingly annoying, not for the loss it

occasioned me, but because I should not have the certainty I now possess of separating myself from all the rest of mankind at pleasure. Let me now endeavour to make you forget this temporary unpleasantness, and offer you what no doubt you did not expect to find here—that is to say, a tolerable supper and pretty comfortable beds.”——“*Ma foi !* my dear sir,” replied Franz, “make no apologies. I have always observed that they bandage people’s eyes who penetrate enchanted palaces, for instance, those of Raoul in the *Huguenots*, and really I have nothing to complain of, for what I see is a sequel to the wonders of the Arabian Nights.”

“Alas ! I may say with Lucullus, if I could have anticipated the honour of your visit, I would have prepared for it. But such as is my hermitage, it is at your disposal ; such as is my supper, it is yours to share, if you will. Ali, is the supper ready ?” At this moment the tapestry moved aside, and a Nubian, black as ebony, and dressed in a plain white tunic, made a sign to his master that all was prepared in the *salle-à-manger*. “Now,” said the unknown to Franz, “I do not know if you are of my opinion, but I think nothing is more annoying than to remain two or three hours *tête-à-tête* without knowing by name or appellation how to address one another. Pray observe, that I too much respect the laws of hospitality to ask your name or title. I only request you to give me one by which I may have the pleasure of addressing you. As for myself, that I may put you at your ease, I tell you that I am generally called ‘Sinbad the Sailor.’”

“And I,” replied Franz, “will tell you, as I only require his wonderful lamp to make me precisely like Aladdin, that I see no reason why at this moment I should not be called Aladdin. That will keep us from going away from the East, whither I am tempted to think I have been conveyed by some good genius.”——“Well, then, Signor Aladdin,” replied the singular Amphytrion, “if you heard our master announced : will you now take

"Would it be impertinent, Signor Sinbad," said Franz, "to ask you the particulars of this kindness?"

"Oh! they are simple enough," replied the host. "It seems the fellow had been caught wandering nearer to the harem of the Bey of Tunis than etiquette permits to one of his colour, and he was condemned by the Bey to have his tongue cut out and his hand and head cut off; the tongue the first day, the hand the second, and the head the third. I always had a desire to have a mute in my service, so learning the day his tongue was cut out, I went to the Bey, and proposed to give him for Ali a splendid double-barrelled gun, which I knew he was very desirous of having. He hesitated a moment, he was so very desirous to complete the poor devil's punishment. But when I added to the gun an English cutlass with which I had shivered his highness's yataghan to pieces, the Bey yielded, and agreed to forgive the hand and head, but on condition he never again set foot in Tunis. This was a useless clause in the bargain, for whenever the coward sees the first glimpse of the shores of Africa, he runs down below, and can only be induced to appear again when we are out of sight of one quarter of the globe."

Franz remained a moment mute and pensive, hardly knowing what to think of the half-kindness, half-cruelty, with which his host related the brief narrative. "And like the celebrated sailor whose name you have assumed," he said, by way of changing the conversation, "you pass your life in travelling?"—"Yes. I made a vow at a time when I little thought I should ever be able to accomplish it," said the unknown, with a singular smile; "and I made some others also, which I hope I may fulfil in due season." Although Sinbad pronounced these words with much calmness, his eyes darted gleams of singular ferocity.

"You have suffered a great deal, sir?" said Franz, inquiringly.

Sinbad started and looked fixedly at him, as he replied, "What makes you suppose so?"—"Everything!" answered Franz,—"*your voice, your look, your pallid complexion, and even the life you lead.*"

"I! I live the happiest life possible, the real life of a pasha. I am king of all creation. I am pleased with one place, and stay there; I get tired of it, and leave it; I am free as a bird, and have wings like one: my attendants obey me at a signal. Sometimes I amuse myself by carrying off from human justice some bandit it is in quest of, some criminal whom it pursues. Then I have my mode of dispensing justice, silent and sure, without respite or appeal, which condemns or pardons, and which no one sees. Ah! if you had tasted my life, you would not desire any other, and would never return to the world unless you had some great project to accomplish there."—"A vengeance, for instance?" observed Franz.

The unknown fixed on the young man one of those looks which penetrate into the depth of the heart and thoughts. "And why a vengeance?" he asked.

"Because," replied Franz, "you seem to me like a man who, persecuted by society, has a fearful account to settle with it."—"Ah!" responded Sinbad, laughing with his singular laugh, which displayed his white and sharp teeth. "You have not guessed rightly! Such as you see me I am, a sort of philosopher, and one day perhaps I shall go to Paris to rival M. Appert, and the little man in the blue cloak."

"And will that be the first time you ever took that journey?"

"Yes, it will! I must seem to you by no means curious, but I assure you that it is *not my fault* I have delayed it so long—it will happen one day or the other."

"And do you propose to make this journey very shortly?"—"I do not know; it depends on circumstances which depend on certain arrangements!"

"I should like to be there at the time you come, and I will endeavour to repay you, as far as lies in my power, for your liberal hospitality displayed to me at Monte-Cristo."—"I should avail myself of your offer with pleasure," replied the host, "but, unfortunately, if I go there, it will be, in all probability, incognito."

The supper appeared to have been supplied solely for Franz, for the unknown scarcely touched one or two dishes of the splendid banquet to which his guest did ample justice. Then Ali brought on the dessert, or rather took the baskets from the hands of the statues and placed them on the table. Between the two baskets he placed a small silver cup, closed with a lid of the same. The care with which Ali placed this cup on the table roused Franz's curiosity. He raised the lid and saw a kind of greenish paste, something like preserved angelica, but which was perfectly unknown to him. He replaced the lid, as ignorant of what the cup contained as he was before he had looked at it, and then casting his eyes towards his host he saw him smile at his disappointment. "You cannot guess," said he, "what there is in that small vase, can you?"

"No, I really cannot."

"Well, then, that kind of green preserve is nothing less than the ambrosia which Hebe served at the table of Jupiter."—"But," replied Franz, "this ambrosia, no doubt, in passing through mortal hands has lost its heavenly appellation and assumed a human name; in vulgar phrase, what may you term this composition, for which, to say the truth, I do not feel any particular desire?"

"Ah! thus it is that our material origin is revealed," cried Sinbad; "we frequently pass so near to happiness without seeing, without regarding it, or if we do see and regard it, yet without recognising it. Are you a

fruit, and ever-lovely virgins. But what these happy persons took for reality was but a dream : but it was a dream so soft, so voluptuous, so entrhralling, that they sold themselves body and soul to him who gave it to them ; and obedient to his orders as those of a deity, struck down the marked victim, died in torture without a murmur ; believing that the death they underwent was but a quick transition to that life of delights of which the holy herb, now before you, had given them a slight foretaste."

"Then," cried Franz, "it is hatchis ! I know that—by name at least."

"That is it precisely, Signor Aladdin ; it is hatchis—the purest and most unadulterated hatchis of Alexandria,—the hatchis of Abou-Gor, the celebrated maker, the only man, the man to whom there should be built a palace, inscribed with these words, '*A grateful world to the dealer in happiness.*'"

"Do you know," said Franz, "I have a very great inclination to judge for myself of the truth or exaggeration of your eulogies."

"Judge for yourself, Signor Aladdin—judge, but do not confine yourself to one trial. Like everything else, we must habituate the senses to a fresh impression, gentle or violent, sad or joyous. There is a struggle in nature against this divine substance,—in nature which is not made for joy and clings to pain. Nature subdued must yield in the combat, the dream must succeed to reality, and then the dream reigns supreme, then the dream becomes life, and life becomes the dream. But what changes occur ! It is only by comparing the pains of actual being with the joys of the assumed existence, that you would desire to live no longer, but to dream thus for ever. When you return to this mundane sphere from your visionary world, you would seem to leave a Neapolitan spring for a Lapland winter—to quit paradise for earth—heaven for hell ! Taste the hatchis, guest of mine—taste the hatchis."

Franz's only reply was to take a tea-spoonful of the marvellous preparation, about as much in quantity as his host had eaten, and lift it to his mouth. "*Diable !*" he said, after having swallowed the divine preserve. "I do not know if the result will be as agreeable as you describe, but the thing does not appear to me as succulent as you say."

"Because your palate has not yet attained the sublimity of the substances it flavours. Tell me, the first time you tasted oysters, tea, porter, truffles, and sundry other dainties which you now adore, did you like them ? Could you comprehend how the Romans stuffed their pheasants with assafoetida, and the Chinese eat swallows' nests ? Eh ? no ! Well, it is the same with hatchis ; only eat for a week, and nothing in the world will seem to you to equal the delicacy of its flavour, which now appears to you sleepy and distasteful. Let us now go into the chamber beside you, which is your apartment, and Ali will bring us coffee and pipes." They both arose, and whilst he who called himself Sinbad,—and whom we have occasionally named so, that we might, like his guest, have some title by which to distinguish him,—gave some orders to the servant, Franz entered the adjoining apartment. It was simply yet richly furnished. It was round, and a large divan completely encircled it. Divan, walls, ceiling, floor, were all covered with magnificent skins as soft and downy as the richest carpets ; there were skins of the lions of Atlas, with their large manes, skins of the Bengal tigers, with their striped hides ; skins of the panthers of the Cape, spotted beautifully, like those that appeared to Dante ; skins of the bears of Siberia, the foxes of Norway, &c. ; and all these skins were strewn in profusion one on the other, so that it seemed like walking over the most mossy turf, or reclining on the most luxurious bed. Both laid themselves

down on the divan ; chibouques with jasmine tubes and amber mouth-pieces were within reach, and all prepared so that there was no need to smoke the same pipe twice. Each of them took one, which Ali lighted, and then retired to prepare the coffee. There was a moment's silence, during which Sinbad gave himself up to thoughts that seemed to occupy him incessantly, even in the midst of his conversation ; and Franz abandoned himself to that mute reverie, into which we always sink when smoking excellent tobacco, which seems to remove with its fume all the troubles of the mind, and to give the smoker in exchange all the visions of the soul. Ali brought in the coffee. "How do you take it?" inquired the unknown ; "*à la Française* or *à la Turque*, strong or weak, sugar or none, cool or boiling? As you please ; it is ready in all ways."—"I will take it *à la Turque*," replied Franz.

"And you are right," said his host ; "it shows you have a tendency for an Oriental life. Ah ! those Orientals ; they are the only men who know how to live. As for me," he added, with one of those singular smiles which did not escape the young man, "when I have completed my affairs in Paris, I shall go and die in the East ; and should you wish to see me again, you must seek me at Cairo, Bagdad, or Ispahan."

"*Ma foi !*" said Franz, "it would be the easiest thing in the world ; for I feel eagle's wings springing out at my shoulders, and with these wings I could make a tour of the world in four-and-twenty hours."

"Ah ! ah ! it is the hatchis that is operating. Well, unfurl your wings, and fly into superhuman regions ; fear nothing, there is a watch over you ; and if your wings, like those of Icarus, melt before the sun, we are here to receive you." He then said some Arabian words to Ali, who made a sign of obedience and withdrew, but not to any distance. As to Franz, a strange transformation had taken place in him. All the bodily fatigue of the day, all the pre-occupation of mind which the events of the evening

He towards him with looks of love, and approached the statue, and with a reproving, their feet hidden in their long tanks, their faces pale and smiling, like waves and a-sunning statues with the gleams of the sun which salutes wither'd flowers, and as he drew nearer, he felt it as on the bird ; and then he gave way before that look as firm and powerful grasp and as delightful as a kiss. It seemed to Franz that the statue's eyes, and thought that in the last look he gave he saw the statue completely veiled ; and then with his eyes closed upon all his senses awoke to impassable impressions, and he was under the still yet delicious enthrallment produced by the hatchis, whose enchantment had brought up this marvellous and thrilling vision.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WAKING.

Franz returned to himself, exterior objects seemed a second portion of dream. He thought himself in a sepulchre, into which scarcely penetrated (and then like a look of pity) a ray of the sun. He stretched forth his hand, and touched stone ; he rose to his seat, and found himself lying in a bournous in a bed of dry heather, very soft and odoriferous. The statues had entirely fled ; and as if the statues had been but shadows common to their tomb during his dream, they vanished at his waking. He paced several paces towards the point whence the light came, and to the excitement of his dream succeeded the calmness of reality. He thought that he was in a grotto, went towards the opening, and through a narrow fanlight saw a blue sea and an azure sky. The air and water were fresh in the beams of the morning sun ; on the shore the sailors were laughing and chatting ; and at ten yards from them the bark was at anchor, undulating gracefully on the water. There for some time he enjoyed

fectly clear, and his limbs entirely reposed ; he was free from the slightest headache ; on the contrary, he felt a certain degree of lightness, a faculty of absorbing the pure air, and enjoying the bright sunshine more vividly than ever.

He went gaily up to the sailors, who rose as soon as they perceived him ; and the patron, accosting him, said, "The Signor Sinbad has left his compliments for your excellency, and desires us to express the regret he feels at not being able to take his leave in person ; but he trusts you will excuse him, as very important business calls him to Malaga."

"So, then, Gaetano," said Franz, "this is, then, all reality : there exists a man who has received me in this isle, entertained me right royally, and has departed whilst I was asleep?"—"He exists as certainly as that you may see his small yacht with all her sails spread ; and if you will use your glass, you will, in all probability, recognise your host in the midst of his crew." So saying, Gaetano pointed in a direction in which a small vessel was making sail towards the southern point of Corsica. Franz adjusted his telescope, and directed it towards the bark. Gaetano was not mistaken. At the stern the mysterious stranger was standing up, looking towards the shore, and holding a spy-glass in his hand. He was attired as he had been on the previous evening, and waved his pocket-handkerchief to his guest in token of adieu. Franz returned the salute by shaking his handkerchief as an exchange of signals. After a second, a slight cloud of smoke was seen at the stern of the vessel, which rose gracefully as it expanded in the air, and then Franz heard a slight report. "There, do you hear?" observed Gaetano ; "he is bidding you adieu." The young man took his carbine and fired it in the air, but without any idea that the noise could be heard at the distance which separated the yacht from the shore. "What are your excellency's orders?" inquired Gaetano.

"In the first place, light me a torch."—"Ah, yes, I understand," re-

domestic goats, and Franz could not consider them as game. Moreover, other ideas, much more powerful, occupied his mind. Since the evening before, he had really been the hero of one of the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights," and he was irresistibly attracted towards the grotto. Then, in spite of the failure of his first search, he began a second, after having told Gaetano to roast one of the two kids. The second visit was a long one, and when he returned the kid was roasted and the repast ready. Franz was sitting on the spot where he was on the previous evening when his mysterious host had invited him to supper; and he saw the little yacht, now like a sea-gull on the wave, continuing her flight towards Corsica. "Why," he remarked to Gaetano, "you told me that Signor Sinbad was going to Malaga, whilst it seems he is in the direction of Porto-Vecchio."

"Don't you remember," said the patron, "I told you that amongst the crew there were two Corsican brigands?"

"True! and he is going to land them," added Franz.

"Precisely so," replied Gaetano. "Ah! he is an individual who fears neither God nor devil, they say, and would at any time run fifty leagues out of his course to do a poor devil a service."

"But such services as these might involve him with the authorities of the country in which he practises this kind of philanthropy," said Franz.

"And what cares he for that," replied Gaetano with a laugh, "or any authorities? He smiles at them. Let them try to pursue him! why, in the first place, his yacht is not a ship, but a bird, and he would beat any frigate three knots in every nine; and if he were to throw himself on the coast, why, ain't he certain of finding friends everywhere?"

It was perfectly clear that the Signor Sinbad, Franz's host, had the honour of being on excellent terms with the smugglers and bandits along the whole coast of the Mediterranean, which placed him in a position singular enough. As to Franz, he had no longer any inducement to remain at Monte-Cristo. He had lost all hope of detecting the secret of the grotto; he consequently despatched his breakfast, and, his bark being ready, he hastened on board, and they were soon under way. At the moment the bark began her course they lost sight of the yacht, as it disappeared in the gulf of Porto-Vecchio. With it was effaced the last trace of the preceding night; and then supper, Sinbad, hatchis, statues—all became a dream for Franz. The bark went on all day and all night, and next morning, when the sun rose, they had lost sight of Monte-Cristo. When Franz had once again set foot on shore, he forgot, for the moment at least, the events which had just passed, whilst he finished his affairs of pleasure at Florence, and then thought of nothing but how he should rejoin his companion, who was awaiting him at Rome.

He set out, and on the Saturday evening reached the Place de la Douane by the *malle-poste*. An apartment, as we have said, had been retained beforehand, and thus he had but to go to the hotel of Maître Pastrini. But this was not so easy a matter, for the streets were thronged with people, and Rome was already a prey to that low and feverish murmur which precedes all great events; and at Rome there are four great events in every year—the Carnival, the Holy Week, the Fête Dieu, and the St. Peter. All the rest of the year the city is in that state of dull apathy, between life and death, which renders it similar to a kind of station between this world and the next—a sublime spot, a resting-place full of poetry and character, and at which Franz had already halted five or six times, and at each time found it more marvellous and striking. At last he made his way through this mob, which was continually increasing and more agitated, and reached

the hotel. On his first inquiry he was told, with the impertinence peculiar to hackney-coachmen who are hired, and innkeepers with their houses full, that there was no room for him at the Hôtel de Londres. Then he sent his card to Maître Pastrini, and demanded Albert de Morcerf. This plan succeeded; and Maître Pastrini himself ran to him, excusing himself for having made his excellency wait, scolding the waiters, taking the candlestick in his hand from the cicerone, who was ready to pounce on the traveller, and was about to lead him to Albert, when Morcerf himself appeared. The apartment consisted of two small rooms and a closet. The two rooms looked on to the street—a fact which Maître Pastrini commented upon as an inappreciable advantage. The remainder of the story was hired by a very rich gentleman, who was supposed to be a Sicilian or Maltese; but the host was unable to decide to which of the two nations the traveller belonged. “Very good, Maître Pastrini,” said Franz; “but we must have some supper instantly, and a carriage for to-morrow and the following days.”—“As to supper,” replied the landlord, “you shall be served immediately; but as for the carriage——”

“What as to the carriage?” exclaimed Albert. “Come, come, Maître Pastrini, no joking; we must have a carriage.”

“Sir,” replied the host, “we will do all in our power to procure you one—this is all I can say.”

“And when shall we know?” inquired Franz.

“To-morrow morning,” answered the innkeeper.

“Oh, the devil! then we shall pay the more, that’s all, I see plainly enough. At Drake and Aaron’s one pays twenty-five francs for common days, and thirty or thirty-five francs a day more for Sundays and *fêtes*; add five francs a day more for extras, that will make forty, and there’s an end of it.”

“I am afraid if we offer them double that we shall not procure a carriage.”

"Well, excellency," said the landlord, triumphantly, and without waiting for Franz to question him, "I feared yesterday, when I would not promise you anything, that you were too late—there is not a single carriage to be had—that is, for the last three days."

"Yes," returned Franz, "that is for the very three days it is most necessary."

"What is the matter?" said Albert, entering; "no carriage to be had?"

"Just so," returned Franz, "you have guessed it."

"Well! your Eternal City is a devilish nice city."

"That is to say, excellency," replied Pastrini, who was desirous to keep up the dignity of the capital of the Christian world in the eyes of his guest, "that there are no carriages to be had from Sunday to Tuesday evening, but from now till Sunday you can have fifty if you please."

"Ah! that is something," said Albert; "to-day is Thursday, and who knows what may arrive between this and Sunday?"

"Ten or twelve thousand travellers will arrive," replied Franz, "which will make it still more difficult."

"My friend," said Morcerf, "let us enjoy the present without gloomy forebodings for the future."—"At least we can have a window?"

"Where?"—"Looking on the Rue du Cours."

"Ah, a window!" exclaimed Maitre Pastrini,—"utterly impossible; there was only one left on the fifth floor of the Doria Palace, and that has been let to a Russian prince for twenty sequins a day."

The two young men looked at each other with an air of stupefaction.

"Well," said Franz to Albert, "do you know what is the best thing we can do? It is to pass the Carnival at Venice; there we are sure of obtaining gondolas if we cannot have carriages."

"Ah! the devil! no," cried Albert; "I came to Rome to see the Carnival, and I will, though I see it on stilts."

"Bravo! an excellent idea! We will disguise ourselves as monster pulchinellos or shepherds of the Landes, and we shall have complete success."

"Do your excellencies still wish for a carriage from now to Sunday morning?"—"Parbleu!" said Albert, "do you think we are going to run about on foot in the streets of Rome, like Lawyers' clerks?"

"I hasten to comply with your excellencies' wishes; only, I tell you beforehand, the carriage will cost you six piastres a day."

"And, as I am not a millionaire, like the gentlemen in the next apartments," said Franz, "I warn you, that as I have been four times before at Rome, I know the prices of all the carriages: we will give you twelve piastres for to-day, to-morrow, and the day after, and then you will make a good profit."

"But, excellency——" said Pastrini, still striving to gain his point.

"Now go," returned Franz, "or I shall go myself and bargain with your *affilatore*, who is mine also; he is an old friend of mine, who has plundered me pretty well already, and, in the hope of making more out of me, he will take a less price than the one I offer you; you will lose the preference, and that will be your fault."

"Do not give yourselves the trouble, excellency," returned Maitre Pastrini, with that smile of the Italian speculator who avows himself defeated; "I will do all I can, and I hope you will be satisfied."

"And now we understand each other."

"When do you wish the carriage to be here?"—"In an hour."

"In an hour it will be at the door."

An hour after the vehicle was at the door ; it was a hack conveyance, which was elevated to the rank of a private carriage in honour of the occasion ; but, in spite of its humble exterior, the young men would have thought themselves happy to have secured it for the last three days of the Carnival. "Excellency," cried the cicerone, seeing Franz approach the window, "shall I bring the carriage nearer to the palace?"

Accustomed as Franz was to the Italian phraseology, his first impulse was to look round him, but these words were addressed to him. Franz was the "excellency," the vehicle was the "carriage," and the Hôtel de Londres was the "palace."

Franz and Albert descended ; the carriage approached the palace ; their excellencies stretched their legs along the seats : the cicerone sprang into the seat behind. "Where do your excellencies wish to go?" asked he.—"To Saint Peter's first, and then to the Colosseum," returned Albert. But Albert did not know that it takes a day to see Saint Peter's, and a month to study it. The day was passed at Saint Peter's alone. Suddenly the daylight began to fade away ; Franz took out his watch—it was half-past four. They returned to the hotel ; at the door Franz ordered the coachman to be ready at eight. He wished to show Albert the Colosseum by moonlight, as he had shown him St. Peter's by daylight. When we show a friend a city one has already visited, we feel the same pride as when we point out a woman whose lover we have been. He was to leave the city by the Porta del Popolo, skirt the outer wall, and re-enter by the Porta San Giovanni ; thus they would behold the Colosseum without being in some measure prepared by the sight of the Capitol, the Forum, the Arch of Septimius Severus, the Temple of Antonius and Faustina, and the Via Sacra. They sat down to dinner. Maître Pastrini had promised them a banquet ; he gave them a tolerable repast. At the end of the dinner he entered in person. Franz concluded he came to hear his dinner praised, and began accordingly, but at the first words he interrupted him. "Excellency," said he, "I am delighted to have your approbation, but it was not for that I came."—"Did you come to tell us you have procured a carriage?" asked Albert, lighting his cigar.

"No ; and your excellencies will do well not to think of that any longer : at Rome things can or cannot be done ; when you are told anything cannot be done, there is an end of it."—"It is much more convenient at Paris,—when anything cannot be done, you pay double, and it is done directly."

"That is what all the French say," returned Maître Pastrini, somewhat piqued ; "for that reason, I do not understand why they travel."

"But," said Albert, emitting a volume of smoke and balancing his chair on its hind legs, "only madmen, or blockheads, like we are, travel. Men in their senses do not quit their hotel in the Rue du Helder, their walk on the Boulevard de Gand, and the Café de Paris." It is of course understood that Albert resided in the aforesaid *rue*, appeared every day on the fashionable walk, and dined frequently at the only *café* where you can really dine, that is, if you are on good terms with its frequenters. Maître Pastrini remained silent a short time ; it was evident that he was musing over this answer, which did not seem very clear. "But," said Franz, in his turn interrupting his host's meditations, "you had some motive for coming here, may I beg to know what it was?"

"Ah, yes ; you have ordered your carriage at eight o'clock precisely?"

"I have."—"You intend visiting *Il Colosseo*."—"You mean the Colosseum?"—"It is the same thing. You have told your coachman to

"Not out of my armoury, for at Terracina I was plundered even of my hunting-knife."

"I shared the same fate at Aquependente."

"Do you know, Maître Pastrini," said Albert, lighting a second cigar at the first, "that this practice is very convenient for robbers, and that it seems to have been an arrangement between them." Doubtless Maître Pastrini found this pleasantry compromising, for he only answered half the question, and then he spoke to Franz, as the only one likely to listen with attention. "Your excellency knows that it is not customary to defend yourself when attacked by bandits."

"What!" cried Albert, whose courage revolted at the idea of being plundered tamely, "not make any resistance!"—"No, for it would be useless. What could you do against a dozen bandits who spring out of some pit, ruin, or aqueduct, and level their pieces at you?"

"Eh, *parbleu*!—they should kill me."

The innkeeper turned to Franz with an air that seemed to say, "Your friend is decidedly mad."

"My dear Albert," returned Franz, "your answer is sublime, and worthy the '*Let him die*,' of Corneille, only, when Horace made that answer, the safety of Rome was concerned; but, as for us, it is only to gratify a whim, and it would be ridiculous to risk our lives for so foolish a motive." Albert poured himself out a glass of *lacryma Christi*, which he sipped at intervals, muttering some unintelligible words.

"Well, Maître Pastrini," said Franz, "now that my companion is quieted, and you have seen how peaceful my intentions are, tell me who is this Luigi Vampa. Is he a shepherd or a nobleman?—young or old?—tall or short? Describe him, in order that, if we meet him by chance, like Jean Sbogor or Lara, we may recognize him."—"You could not apply to any one better

"Scarcely so much."

"Is he tall or short?"—"Of the middle height—about the same stature as his excellency," returned the host, pointing to Albert.

"Thanks for the comparison," said Albert, with a bow.

"Go on, Maltre Pastrini," continued Franz, smiling at his friend's susceptibility. "To what class of society does he belong?"

"He was a shepherd-boy attached to the farm of the Comte de San-Felice, situated between Palestrina and the lake of Gabri; he was born at Pampinara, and entered the count's service when he was five years old; his father was also a shepherd, who owned a small flock, and lived by the wool and the milk, which he sold at Rome. When quite a child, the little Vampa was of a most extraordinary disposition. One day, when he was seven years old, he came to the curé of Palestrina, and prayed him to teach him to read; it was somewhat difficult, for he could not quit his flock; but the good curé went every day to say mass at a little hamlet too poor to pay a priest, and which, having no other name, was called Borgo; he told Luigi that he might meet him on his return, and that then he would give him a lesson, warning him that it would be short, and that he must profit as much as possible by it. The child accepted joyfully. Every day Luigi led his flock to graze on the road that leads from Palestrina to Borgo; every day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the priest and the boy sat down on a bank by the wayside, and the little shepherd took his lesson out of the priest's breviary. At the end of three months he had learned to read. This was not enough—he must now learn to write. The priest had made, by a teacher of writing at Rome, three alphabets—one large, one middling, and one small; and pointed out to him that by the help of a sharp instrument he could trace the letters on a slate, and thus learn to write. The same evening, when the flock was safe at the farm, the little Luigi hastened to the smith at Palestrina, took a large nail, forged it, sharpened it, and formed a sort of style. The next morning he had collected a quantity of slates and commenced. At the end of three months he had learned to write. The curé, astonished at his quickness and intelligence, made him a present of pens, paper, and a penknife. This was a fresh labour, but nothing compared to the first; at the end of a week he wrote as well with the pen as with the style. The curé related this anecdote to the Comte de San-Felice, who sent for the little shepherd, made him read and write before him, ordered his attendant to let him eat with the domestics, and to give him two piastres a month. With this, Luigi purchased books and pencils. He applied to everything his imitative powers, and, like Giotto, when young, he drew on his slate sheep, houses, and trees. Then, with his knife, he began to carve all sorts of objects in wood; it was thus that Pinelli, the famous sculptor, had commenced.

"A girl of six or seven—that is, a little younger than Vampa—tended sheep on a farm near Palestrina; she was an orphan, born at Valmontone, and was named Teresa. The two children met, sat down near each other, let their flocks mingle together, played, laughed, and conversed together: in the evening they separated the flock of the Comte de San-Felice from those of the Baron de Cervetri, and the children returned to their respective farms, promising to meet the next morning. The next day they kept their word, and thus grew up. Vampa was twelve, and Teresa eleven. And yet their natural disposition revealed itself. Besides his taste for the fine arts, which Luigi had carried as far as he could in his solitude, he was sad by fits, ardent by starts, angry by caprice, and always sarcastic. None

of the lads of Pampinara, of Palestrina, or of Valmontone had been able to gain any influence over him, or even to become his companion. His disposition (always inclined to exact concessions rather than to make them) kept him aloof from all friendships. Teresa alone ruled by a look, a word, a gesture, this impetuous character, which yielded beneath the hand of a woman, and which beneath the hand of a man might have broken, but could never have bent or yielded. Teresa was, on the contrary, lively and gay, but coquettish to excess. The two piastres that Luigi received every month from the Comte de San-Felice's steward, and the price of all the little carvings in wood he sold at Rome, were expended in ear-rings, necklaces, and gold hair-pins. So that, thanks to her friend's generosity, Teresa was the most beautiful and the best-attired peasant near Rome. The two children grew up together, passing all their time with each other, and giving themselves up to the wild ideas of their different characters. Thus, in all their dreams, their wishes, and their conversations, Vampa saw himself the captain of a vessel, general of an army, or governor of a province. Teresa saw herself rich, superbly attired, and attended by a train of liveried domestics. Then, when they had thus passed the day in building castles in the air, they separated their flocks, and descended from the elevation of their dreams to the reality of their humble position.

"One day the young shepherd told the count's steward he had seen a wolf come out of the Sabine mountains, and prowl around his flock. The steward gave him a gun; this was what Vampa longed for. This gun had an excellent barrel, made at Breschia, and carrying a ball with the precision of an English rifle; but one day the count broke the stock, and had then cast the gun aside. This, however, was nothing to a sculptor like Vampa; he examined the ancient stock, calculated what change it would require to adapt the gun to his shoulder, and made a fresh stock, so heavy

declared their affection ; they had grown together like two trees whose roots are mingled, whose branches intertwine, and whose perfume rises together to the heavens. Only their wish to see each other had become a necessity, and they would have preferred death to a day's separation. Teresa was sixteen and Vampa eighteen. About this time, a band of brigands that had established itself in the Lepini mountains began to be much spoken of. The brigands have never been really extirpated from the neighbourhood of Rome. Sometimes a chief is wanted, but when a chief presents himself he rarely wants a band.

"The celebrated Cucumetto, pursued in the Abruzzo, driven out of the kingdom of Naples, where he had carried on a regular war, had crossed the Garigliano, like Manfred, and had come between Sonnino and Juperno, to take refuge on the banks of the Amasine. He it was who strove to reorganise a band, and who followed the footsteps of Decesaris and Gasperone, whom he hoped to surpass. Many young men of Palestrina, Frascati, and Pampinara disappeared. Their disappearance at first caused much inquietude ; but it was soon known that they had joined the band of Cucumetto. After some time Cucumetto became the object of universal attention ; the most extraordinary traits of ferocious daring and brutality were related of him. One day he carried off a young girl, the daughter of a surveyor of Frosinone. The bandit's laws are positive : a young girl belongs first to him who carries her off, then the rest draw lots for her, and she is abandoned to their brutality until death relieves her sufferings. When their parents are sufficiently rich to pay a ransom, a messenger is sent to treat concerning it ; the prisoner is hostage for the security of the messenger ; should the ransom be refused, the prisoner is irrevocably lost. The young girl's lover was in Cucumetto's troop ; his name was Carlini. When she recognised her lover, the poor girl extended her arms to him, and believed herself safe ; but Carlini felt his heart sink, for he but too well knew the fate that awaited her. However, as he was a favourite with Cucumetto, as he had for three years faithfully served him, and as he had saved his life by shooting a dragoon who was about to cut him down, he hoped he would have pity on him. He took him apart, whilst the young girl, seated at the foot of a huge pine that stood in the centre of the forest, formed with her picturesque head-dress a veil to hide her face from the lascivious gaze of the bandits. There he told him all—his affection for the prisoner, their promises of mutual fidelity, and how every night, since he had been near, they had met in a ruin.

"It so happened that night that Cucumetto had sent Carlini to a neighbouring village, so that he had been unable to go to the place of meeting. Cucumetto had been there, however, by accident, as he said, and had carried the maiden off. Carlini besought his chief to make an exception in Rita's favour, as her father was rich, and could pay a large ransom. Cucumetto seemed to yield to his friend's entreaties, and bade him find a shepherd to send to Rita's father at Frosinone. Carlini flew joyfully to Rita, telling her she was saved, and bidding her write to her father, to inform him what had occurred, and that her ransom was fixed at three hundred piastres. Twelve hours' delay was all that was granted—that is, until nine the next morning. The instant the letter was written, Carlini seized it, and hastened to the plain to find a messenger. He found a young shepherd watching his flock. The natural messengers of the bandits are the shepherds who live between the city and the mountains, between civilized and savage life. The boy undertook the commission, promising to be in Frosinone in less than an hour. Carlini returned,

anxious to see his mistress, and announce the joyful intelligence. He found the troop in the glade, supping off the provisions exacted as contributions from the peasants ; but his eye vainly sought Rita and Cucumetto amongst them. He inquired where they were, and was answered by a burst of laughter. A cold perspiration burst from every pore, and his hair stood on end. He repeated his question. One of the bandits rose, and offered him a glass filled with wine of Orvietto, saying—‘To the health of the brave Cucumetto and the fair Rita.’ At this moment Carlini heard the cry of a woman ; he divined the truth, seized the glass, broke it across the face of him who presented it, and rushed towards the spot whence the cry came. After a hundred yards he turned the corner of the thicket ; he found Rita senseless in the arms of Cucumetto. At the sight of Carlini, Cucumetto rose, a pistol in each hand. The two brigands looked at each other for a moment—the one with a smile of lasciviousness on his lips, the other with the pallor of death on his brow. It seemed that something terrible was about to pass between these two men ; but by degrees Carlini’s features relaxed, his hand, which had grasped one of the pistols in his belt, fell to his side. Rita lay between them. The moon lighted the group.

“‘Well,’ said Cucumetto, ‘have you executed your commission?’

“‘Yes, captain,’ returned Carlini. ‘At nine o’clock to-morrow Rita’s father will be here with the money.’—‘It is well ; in the meantime, we will have a merry night ; this young girl is charming, and does credit to your taste. Now, as I am not egotistical, we will return to our comrades and draw lots for her.’—‘You have determined, then, to abandon her to the common law?’ said Carlini.

“‘Why should an exception be made in her favour?’

“‘I thought that my entreaties—’

“‘(112) I thought that my entreaties—’

condescending to you than to me.' Every one expected an explosion on Carlini's part; but to their great surprise, he took a glass in one hand and a flask in the other, and filling it,—'Your health, Diavolaccio,' said he calmly, and he drank it off without his hand trembling in the least. Then sitting down by the fire, 'My supper,' said he; 'my expedition has given me an appetite.'—'Well done, Carlini!' cried the brigands; 'that is acting like a good fellow;' and they all formed a circle round the fire, whilst Diavolaccio disappeared. Carlini ate and drank as if nothing had happened. The bandits looked on with astonishment at this singular conduct until they heard footsteps. They turned round, and saw Diavolaccio bearing the young girl in his arms. Her head hung back, and her long hair swept the ground. As they entered the circle, the bandits could perceive, by the firelight, the unearthly pallor of the young girl and of Diavolaccio. This apparition was so strange and so solemn, that every one rose, with the exception of Carlini, who remained seated, and ate and drank calmly. Diavolaccio advanced amidst the most profound silence, and laid Rita at the captain's feet. Then every one could understand the cause of the unearthly pallor of the young girl and the bandit. A knife was plunged up to the hilt in Rita's left breast. Every one looked at Carlini; the sheath at his belt was empty. 'Ah! ah!' said the chief, 'I now understand why Carlini stayed behind.' All savage natures appreciate a desperate deed. No other of the bandits would, perhaps, have done the same; but they all understood what Carlini had done. 'Now, then,' cried Carlini, rising in his turn, and approaching the corpse, his hand on the butt of one of his pistols, 'does any one dispute the possession of this woman with me?'—'No,' returned the chief, 'she is thine.' Carlini raised her in his arms, and carried her out of the circle of light caused by the fire. Cucumetto placed his sentinels for the night, and the bandits wrapped themselves in their cloaks, and lay down before the fire. At midnight the sentinel gave the alarm, and in an instant all were on the alert. It was Rita's father, who brought his daughter's ransom in person. 'Here,' said he, to Cucumetto, 'here are three hundred piastres; give me back my child.' But the chief, without taking the money, made a sign to him to follow him. The old man obeyed. They both advanced beneath the trees, through whose branches streamed the moonlight. Cucumetto stopped at last, and pointed to two persons grouped at the foot of a tree.

"There," said he, "demand thy child of Carlini; he will tell thee what has become of her;" and he returned to his companions. The old man remained motionless; he felt that some great and unforeseen misfortune hung over his head. At length he advanced towards the group, which he could not comprehend. As he approached, Carlini raised his head, and the forms of two persons became visible to the old man's eyes. A female lay on the ground, her head resting on the knees of a man, who was seated by her; as he raised his head, the female's face became visible. The old man recognised his child, and Carlini recognised the old man. 'I expected thee,' said the bandit to Rita's father.—'Wretch!' returned the old man, 'what hast thou done?' and he gazed with terror on Rita, pale and bloody, a knife buried in her bosom. A ray of moonlight poured through the trees, and lighted up the face of the dead.—'Cucumetto had violated thy daughter,' said the bandit; 'I loved her, therefore I slew her; for she would have served as the sport of the whole band.' The old man spoke not, and grew pale as death. 'Now,' continued Carlini, 'if I have done wrongly, *avenge her*; and withdrawing the knife from the wound in Rita's bosom, he held it out to the old man with one hand, whilst with the other

he tore open his vest.—‘Thou hast done well!’ returned the old man, in a hoarse voice; ‘embrace me, my son.’ Carlini threw himself, sobbing like a child, into the arms of his mistress’s father. These were the first tears the man of blood had ever wept. ‘Now,’ said the old man, ‘aid me to bury my child.’ Carlini fetched two pickaxes; and the father and the lover began to dig at the foot of a huge oak, beneath which the young girl was to repose. When the grave was formed, the father embraced her first, and then the lover; afterwards, one taking the head, the other the feet, they placed her in the grave. Then they knelt on each side of the grave, and said the prayers of the dead. Then, when they had finished, they cast the earth over the corpse, until the grave was filled. Then, extending his hand, the old man said, ‘I thank you, my son; and now leave me alone.’——‘Yet——’ replied Carlini.—‘Leave me, I command you.’ Carlini obeyed, rejoined his comrades, folded himself in his cloak, and soon appeared as deep asleep as the rest. It had been resolved the night before to change their encampment. An hour before daybreak, Cucumetto aroused his men, and gave the word to march. But Carlini would not quit the forest, without knowing what had become of Rita’s father. He went towards the place where he had left him. He found the old man suspended from one of the branches of the oak which shaded his daughter’s grave. He then took an oath of bitter vengeance over the dead body of the one and the tomb of the other. But he was unable to complete this oath, for two days afterwards, in a rencontre with the Roman carbineers, Carlini was killed. There was some surprise, however, that, as he was with his face to the enemy, he should have received a ball between his shoulders. That astonishment ceased when one of the brigands remarked to his comrades that Cucumetto was stationed ten paces in Carlini’s rear when he fell. On the morning of the departure from the forest of Frosi-

dragged a brigand prisoner by the neck. The three carbineers scrutinised on all sides, saw the young peasants, and, galloping up, interrogated them. They had seen no one. 'That is very annoying,' said the brigadier; 'for the man we are looking for is the chief.'—'Cucumetto?' cried Luigi and Teresa at the same moment.

"'Yes,' replied the brigadier; 'and as his head is valued at a thousand Roman crowns, there would have been five hundred for you, if you had helped us to catch him.' The two young persons exchanged looks. The brigadier had a moment's hope. Five hundred Roman crowns are three thousand francs, and three thousand francs are a fortune for two poor orphans who are going to be married.

"'Yes, it is very annoying,' said Vampa; 'but we have not seen him.'

"Then the carbineers scoured the country in different directions, but in vain; then, after a time, they disappeared. Vampa then removed the stone, and Cucumetto came out. He had seen, through the crevices in the granite, the two young peasants talking with the carbineers, and guessed the subject of their parley. He had read in the countenances of Luigi and Teresa their steadfast resolution not to surrender him, and he drew from his pocket a purse full of gold, which he offered to them. But Vampa raised his head proudly; as to Teresa, her eyes sparkled when she thought of all the fine gowns and gay jewellery she could buy with this purse of gold.

"Cucumetto was a cunning fiend, and had assumed the form of a brigand instead of a serpent, and this look of Teresa revealed to him that she was a worthy daughter of Eve, and he returned to the forest, pausing several times on his way, under the pretext of saluting his protectors. Several days elapsed, and they neither saw nor heard of Cucumetto. The time of the Carnival was at hand. The Comte de San-Felice announced a grand masqued ball, to which all that were distinguished in Rome were invited. Teresa had a great desire to see this ball. Luigi asked permission of his protector, the steward, that she and he might be present amongst the servants of the house. This was granted. The ball was given by the count for the particular pleasure of his daughter Carmela, whom he adored. Carmela was precisely the age and figure of Teresa, and Teresa was as handsome as Carmela. On the evening of the ball Teresa was attired in her best, her most brilliant hair ornaments, and gayest glass beads,—she was in the costume of the women of Frascati. Luigi wore the very picturesque garb of the Roman peasant at holiday time. They both mixed, as they had leave to do, with the servants and peasants.

"The fête was magnificent; not only was the villa brilliantly illuminated, but thousands of coloured lanterns were suspended from the trees in the garden; and very soon the palace overflowed to the terraces, and the terraces to the garden-walks. At each cross-path was an orchestra, and tables spread with refreshments; the guests stopped, formed quadrilles, and danced in every part of the grounds they pleased. Carmela was attired like a woman of Sonnino. Her cap was embroidered with pearls, the pins in her hair were of gold and diamonds, her girdle was of Turkey silk, with large embroidered flowers, her bodice and skirt were of cachemire, her apron of Indian muslin, and the buttons of her corset were of jewels. Two of her companions were dressed, the one as a woman of Nettuno, and the other as a woman of La Riccia. Four young men of the richest and noblest families of Rome accompanied them with that Italian freedom which has not its parallel in any other country of the world. They

were attired as peasants of Albano, Velletri, Civita-Castellana, and Sora. We need hardly add that these peasant costumes, like those of the females, were brilliant with gold and jewels.

"Carmela wished to make a uniform quadrille, but there was one lady wanting. Carmela looked all around her, but not one of the guests had a costume similar to her own, or those of her companions. The Comte de San-Felice pointed out to her, in the group of peasants, Teresa, who was hanging on Luigi's arm. 'Will you allow me, father?' said Carmela.—'Certainly,' replied the comte, 'are we not in Carnival time?'—Carmela turned towards the young man who was talking with her, and saying a few words to him, pointed with her finger to Teresa. The young man followed with his eyes the lovely hand which made this indication, bowed in obedience, and then went to Teresa, and invited her to dance in a quadrille directed by the count's daughter. Teresa felt something like a flame pass over her face; she looked at Luigi, who could not refuse his assent. Luigi slowly relinquished Teresa's arm, which he had held beneath his own, and Teresa, accompanied by her elegant cavalier, took her appointed place with much agitation in the aristocratic quadrille. Certainly, in the eyes of an artist, the exact and strict costume of Teresa had a very different character from that of Carmela and her companions; and Teresa was frivolous and coquettish, and thus the embroidery and muslins, the cachemire waist-girdles, all dazzled her, and the reflection of sapphires and diamonds almost turned her giddy brain.

"Luigi felt a sensation hitherto unknown arising in his mind. It was like an acute pain which gnawed at his heart, and then passed thrillingly throughout his frame, chasing through his veins and pervading his entire body. He followed with his eye each movement of Teresa and her cavalier; when their hands touched, he felt as though he should swoon; every pulse beat with violence, and it seemed as though a bell were ringing in his ears.

objecting to it, but the Comte de San-Felice begged his daughter so earnestly, that she acceded to it. One of the cavaliers then hastened to invite Teresa, without whom it was impossible the quadrille could be formed, but the young girl had disappeared. The truth was, that Luigi had not felt the strength to support another such trial, and, half by persuasion and half by force, he had removed Teresa towards another part of the garden. Teresa had yielded in spite of herself, but when she looked at the agitated countenance of the young man, she understood by his silence and trembling voice that something strange was passing within him. She herself was not exempt from internal emotion, and without having done anything wrong, yet fully comprehended that Luigi was right in reproaching her. Why she did not know, but yet she did not the less feel that these reproaches were merited. However, to Teresa's great astonishment, Luigi remained mute, and not a word escaped his lips the rest of the evening. When the chill of the night had driven away the guests from the gardens, and the gates of the villa were closed on them for the fête indoors, he took Teresa quite away, and as he left her at her home, he said,—

“ ‘Teresa, what were you thinking of as you danced opposite the young Comtesse de San-Felice?’—‘I thought,’ replied the young girl, with all the frankness of her nature, ‘that I would give half my life for a costume such as she wore.’

“ ‘And what said your cavalier to you?’—‘He said it only depended on myself to have it, and I had only one word to say.’

“ ‘He was right,’ said Luigi. ‘Do you desire it as ardently as you say?’—‘Yes.’—‘Well, then, you shall have it!’

“The young girl, much astonished, raised her head to look at him, but his face was so gloomy and terrible that her words froze to her lips. As Luigi spoke thus, he left her. Teresa followed him with her eyes into the darkness as long as she could, and when he had quite disappeared, she entered her apartment with a sigh.

“That night a great accident happened, no doubt from the imprudence of some servant who had neglected to extinguish the lights. The Villa de San-Felice took fire in the rooms adjoining the very apartment of the lovely Carmela. Awoke in the night by the light of the flames, she had sprung out of bed, wrapped herself in a dressing-gown, and attempted to escape by the door, but the corridor by which she hoped to fly was already a prey to the flames. She had then returned to her room, calling for help as loudly as she could, when suddenly her window, which was twenty feet from the ground, was opened, a young peasant jumped into the chamber, seized her in his arms, and with superhuman skill and strength conveyed her to the turf of the grass-plot, where she fainted. When she recovered, her father was by her side. All the servants surrounded her, offering her assistance. An entire wing of the villa was burnt down; but what was that, as Carmela was safe and uninjured? Her preserver was everywhere sought for, but her deliverer did not appear; he was inquired for everywhere, but no one had seen him. Carmela was greatly troubled that she had not recognised him. As the count was immensely rich, excepting the danger Carmela had run, and, as appeared to him, the marvellous manner in which she had escaped, which was rather a favour of Providence than a real misfortune, the loss occasioned by the conflagration was to him but a trifle.

“The next day, at the usual hour, the two young peasants were on the borders of the forest. Luigi arrived first. He came towards Teresa in high spirits, and seemed to have completely forgotten the events of the previous evening. The young girl was very pensive, but seeing Luigi so

cheerful, she on her part assumed a smiling air, which was natural to her when no excitement of passion came to disturb her. Luigi took her arm beneath his own, and led her to the door of the grotto. Then he paused. The young girl, perceiving that there was something extraordinary, looked at him steadfastly. 'Teresa,' said Luigi, 'yesterday evening you told me you would give all the world to have a costume similar to that of the count's daughter.'—'Yes,' replied Teresa, with astonishment; 'but I was mad to utter such a wish.'—'And I replied, "Very well, you shall have it."—"Yes," replied the young girl, whose astonishment increased at every word uttered by Luigi, 'but of course your reply was only to please me.'

"I have promised no more than I have given you," Teresa, said Luigi, proudly. 'Go into the grotto and dress yourself.' At these words he drew away the stone, and showed Teresa the grotto, lighted up by two wax lights, which burnt on each side of a splendid mirror; on a rustic table, made by Luigi, were spread out the pearl necklace and the diamond pins, and on a chair at the side was laid the rest of the costume.

"Teresa uttered a cry of joy, and, without inquiring whence this attire came, or even thanking Luigi, darted into the grotto, transformed into a dressing-room. Luigi pushed the stone behind her, for he saw on the crest of a small adjacent hill which prevented him from seeing Palestrina from where he was, a traveller on horseback, who stopped a moment, as if uncertain of his road, and thus presented, in the blue sky, that perfect outline peculiar to the distances of southern climes. When he saw Luigi, he put his horse into a gallop and advanced towards him. Luigi was not mistaken. The traveller, who was going from Palestrina to Tivoli, had mistaken his way; the young man directed him; but as at a quarter of a mile distance the road again divided into three ways, and on reaching these the traveller might again stray from his route, he begged Luigi to be

the Sailor.'” Franz d'Epina started with surprise.—“Sinbad the Sailor,” he said.

“Yes,” replied the narrator; “that was the name which the traveller gave to Vampa as his own.”

“Well, and what may you have to say against this name?” inquired Albert; “it is a very pretty name, and the adventures of the gentleman of that name amused me very much in my youth, I must confess.”—Franz said no more. The name of Sinbad the Sailor, as may well be supposed, awakened in him a world of recollections, as had the name of the Count of Monte-Cristo on the previous evening.—“Proceed!” said he to the host.

“Vampa put the two sequins haughtily into his pocket, and slowly returned by the way he had gone. As he came within two or three hundred paces of the grotto, he thought he heard a cry. He listened to know whence this sound could proceed. A moment afterwards and he heard his own name pronounced distinctly. The cry proceeded from the grotto. He bounded like a chamois, cocking his carbine as he went, and in a moment reached the summit of a hill opposite to that on which he had perceived the traveller. Thence cries of help came more distinctly on his ear. He cast his eyes around him, and saw a man carrying off Teresa, as did the Centaur Nessus, Dejanira. This man, who was hastening towards the wood, was already three-quarters of the way on the road from the grotto to the forest. Vampa measured the distance: the man was at least two hundred paces in advance of him, and there was not a chance of overtaking him. The young shepherd stopped, as if his feet had been rooted to the ground; then he put the butt of his carbine to his shoulder, took aim at the ravisher, followed him for a second in his track, and then fired. The ravisher stopped suddenly, his knees bent under him, and he fell with Teresa in his arms. The young girl rose instantly, but the man lay on the earth struggling in the agonies of death. Vampa then rushed towards Teresa; for at ten paces from the dying man her legs had failed her, and she had dropped on her knees, so that the young man feared that the ball that had brought down his enemy, had also wounded his betrothed. Fortunately, she was unscathed, and it was fright alone that had overcome Teresa. When Luigi had assured himself that she was safe and unharmed, he turned towards the wounded man. He had just expired, with clenched hands, his mouth in a spasm of agony, and his hair on end in the sweat of death. His eyes remained open and menacing. Vampa approached the carcass, and recognised Cucumetto. From the day on which the bandit had been saved by the two young peasants, he had been enamoured of Teresa, and had sworn she should be his. From that time he had watched them, and profiting by the moment when her lover had left her alone, whilst he guided the traveller on his way, had carried her off, and believed he at length had her in his power, when the ball, directed by the unerring skill of the young herdsman, had pierced his heart. Vampa gazed on him for a moment without betraying the slightest emotion; whilst, on the contrary, Teresa, shuddering in every limb, dared not approach the slain ruffian but by degrees, and threw a hesitating glance at the dead body over the shoulder of her lover. Suddenly Vampa turned towards his mistress:—‘Ah! ah!’ said he—‘good, good! you are attired; it is now my turn to dress myself.’”

“Teresa was clothed from head to foot in the garb of the Comte de San-Felice's daughter. Vampa took Cucumetto's body in his arms and conveyed it to the grotto, whilst in her turn Teresa remained outside. If a second

traveller had passed, he would have seen a strange thing ; a shepherdess watching her flock, clad in a cachemire gown, with ear-rings and necklace of pearls, diamond pins, and buttons of sapphires, emeralds, and rubies. He would, no doubt, have believed that he had returned to the times of Florian, and would have declared, on reaching Paris, that he had met a shepherdess of the Alps seated at the foot of the Sabine Hill. At the end of a quarter of an hour Vampa quitted the grotto ; his costume was no less elegant than that of Teresa. He wore a vest of garnet-coloured velvet, with buttons of cut gold ; a silk waistcoat covered with embroidery ; a Roman scarf tied round his neck ; a cartouche-box worked with gold, and red and green silk ; sky-blue velvet breeches, fastened above the knee with diamond buckles ; garters of deer-skin, worked with a thousand arabesques, and a hat whereon hung ribands of all colours ; two watches hung from his girdle, and a splendid poniard was in his belt. Teresa uttered a cry of admiration. Vampa in this attire resembled a painting by Leopold Robert or Schnetz. He had assumed the entire costume of Cumetto. The young man saw the effect produced on his betrothed, and a smile of pride passed over his lips.—‘ Now,’ he said to Teresa, ‘ are you ready to share my fortune, whatever it may be ?’——‘ Oh, yes !’ exclaimed the young girl enthusiastically.—‘ And follow me wherever I go ?’——‘ To the world’s end.’——‘ Then take my arm, and let us on, we have no time to lose.’—The young girl did so without questioning her lover as to where he was conducting her, for he appeared to her at this moment, as handsome, proud, and powerful as a god. They went towards the forest, and soon entered it. We need scarcely say that all the paths of the mountain were known to Vampa ; he therefore went forward without a moment’s hesitation, although there was no beaten track ; but he knew his path by looking at the trees and bushes ; and thus they kept on advancing for nearly an hour and a half. At the end of this time they had reached

—an extinct volcano before the days when Remus and Romulus had deserted Alba to come and found the city of Rome. Teresa and Luigi reached the summit, and all at once found themselves in the presence of twenty bandits. 'Here is a young man who seeks and wishes to speak to you,' said the sentinel.—'What has he to say?' inquired the young man who was in command in the chief's absence.—'I wish to say that I am tired of a shepherd's life,' was Vampa's reply.—'Ah, I understand,' said the lieutenant; 'and you seek admittance into our ranks?'—'Welcome!' cried several bandits of Perrusino, Pampinara, and Anagni, who had recognised Luigi Vampa.—'Yes, but I come to ask something more than to be your companion.'—'And what may that be?' inquired the bandits, with astonishment.—'I come to ask to be your captain,' said the young man. The bandits shouted with laughter. 'And what have you done to aspire to this honour?' demanded the lieutenant.—'I have killed your chief, Cucumetto, whose dress I now wear; and I set fire to the Villa San-Felice to procure a wedding-dress for my betrothed.' An hour afterwards Luigi Vampa was chosen captain, vice Cucumetto deceased."

"Well, my dear Albert," said Franz, turning towards his friend, "what think you of citizen Luigi Vampa?"

"I say he is a myth," replied Albert, "and never had an existence."

"And what may a myth be?" inquired Pastrini.

"The explanation would be too long, my dear landlord," replied Franz.

"And you say that Maître Vampa exercises his profession at this moment in the environs of Rome?"—"And with a boldness of which no bandit before him ever gave an example."

"Then the police have vainly tried to lay hands on him?"—"Why, you see, he has a good understanding with the shepherds in the plains, the fishermen of the Tiber, and the smugglers of the coast. They seek for him in the mountains, and he is on the waters; they follow him on the waters, and he is on the open sea; then they pursue him, and he has suddenly taken refuge in the isle of Giglio, of Guanouti, or Monte-Cristo; and when they hunt for him there, he reappears suddenly at Albano, Tivoli, or La Riccia."

"And how does he behave towards travellers?"—"Alas! his plan is very simple. It depends on the distance he may be from the city, whether he gives eight hours, twelve hours, or a day wherein to pay their ransom; and when that time has elapsed he allows another hour's grace. At the sixtieth minute of this hour, if the money is not forthcoming, he blows out the prisoner's brains with a pistol-shot, or plants his dagger in his heart, and that settles the account."

"Well, Albert," inquired Franz of his companion, "are you still disposed to go to the Colosseum by the outer Boulevards?"—"Perfectly," said Albert, "if the way be picturesque." The clock struck nine as the door opened, and a coachman appeared. "Excellencies," said he, "the coach is ready."

"Well, then," said Franz, "let us to the Colosseum."

"By the Porta del Popolo or by the streets, your excellencies?"

"By the streets, *morbieu!* by the streets!" cried Franz.

"Ah, my dear fellow," said Albert, rising, and lighting his third cigar, "really, I thought you had more courage." So saying, the two young men went down the staircase, and got into the carriage.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE COLOSSEUM.

FRANZ had so managed his route, that during the ride to the Colosseum they passed not a single ancient ruin, so that no gradual preparation was made on the mind for the colossal proportions of the gigantic building they came to admire. The road selected was a continuation of the Via Sistina ; then, by cutting off the right angle of the street in which stands Santa Maria Maggiore, and proceeding by the Via Urbana and San Pietro in Vincoli, the travellers would find themselves directly opposite the Colosseum. This itinerary possessed another great advantage—that of leaving Franz at full liberty to indulge his deep reverie upon the subject of the story recounted by Maître Pastrini, in which his mysterious host of the isle of Monte-Cristo was so strangely mixed up. Seated with folded arms in a corner of the carriage, he continued to ponder over the singular history he had so lately listened to, and to ask himself an interminable number of questions touching its various circumstances, without, however, arriving at a satisfactory reply to any of them. One fact more than the rest brought his friend "Sinbad the Sailor" back to his recollection, and that was the mysterious sort of intimacy that seemed to exist between the brigands and the sailors ; and Pastrini's account of Vampa's having found refuge on board the vessels of smugglers and fishermen, reminded Franz of the two Corsican bandits he had found supping so amicably with the crew of the little yacht, which had even deviated from its course and touched at Porto-Vecchio for the sole purpose of landing them. The very name assumed by his host of Monte-Cristo, and again repeated by the landlord of the Hôtel de Londres, abundantly proved to him that his island friend was playing his philanthropic part equally on the shores of Piombino, Civita Vecchia, Ostia, and Gaëta, as on those of Corsica, Tus-

break their bondage, as the guides alone are permitted to visit these monuments with torches in their hands. Thus, then, the young men made no attempt at resistance, but blindly and confidently surrendered themselves into the care and custody of their conductors. Albert had already made seven or eight similar excursions to the Colosseum, while his less favoured companion trod for the first time in his life the classic ground forming the monument of Flavius Vespasian, and, to his credit be it spoken, his mind, even amid the glib loquacity of the guides, was duly and deeply touched with awe and enthusiastic admiration of all he saw ; and certainly no adequate notion of these stupendous ruins can be formed save by such as have visited them, and more especially by moonlight, at which time the vast proportions of the building appear twice as large when viewed by the mysterious beams of a southern moonlit sky, whose rays are sufficiently clear and vivid to gild the horizon with a glow equal to the soft twilight of an eastern clime. Scarcely, therefore, had the reflective Franz walked a hundred steps beneath the interior porticoes of the ruin, than, abandoning Albert to the guides, who would by no means yield their prescriptive right of carrying their victims through the routine regularly laid down, and as regularly followed by them, but dragged the unconscious visitor to the various objects with a pertinacity that admitted of no appeal ; beginning, as a matter of course, with the "Fosse des Lions," and finishing with the "Podium des Césars," to escape a jargon and mechanical survey of the wonders by which he was surrounded, Franz ascended a half-dilapidated staircase, and, leaving them to follow their monotonous round, seated himself at the foot of a column, and immediately opposite a large chasm, which permitted him to enjoy a full and undisturbed view of the gigantic dimensions of this majestic ruin.

Franz had remained for nearly a quarter of an hour perfectly hidden by the shadow of the vast column at whose base he had found a resting-place, and from whence his eyes followed the motions of Albert and his guides, who, holding torches in their hands, had emerged from a vomitorium placed at the opposite extremity of the Colosseum, and then again disappeared down the steps conducting to the seats reserved for the Vestal virgins, resembling, as they glided along, some restless shades following the flickering glare of so many *ignes-fatui*, when all at once his ear caught a sound resembling that of a stone rolling down the staircase opposite the one by which he had himself ascended. There was nothing remarkable in the circumstance of a morsel of granite giving way and falling heavily below ; but it seemed to him that the substance that fell gave way beneath the pressure of a foot, and also that some one, who endeavoured as much as possible to prevent his footsteps from being heard, was approaching the spot where he sat. Conjecture soon became certainty, for the figure of a man was distinctly visible to Franz, gradually emerging from the staircase opposite, upon which the moon was at that moment pouring a full tide of silvery brightness.

The stranger thus presenting himself was probably a person who, like Franz, preferred the enjoyment of solitude and his own thoughts to the frivolous gabble of the guides. And his appearance had nothing extraordinary in it ; but the hesitation with which he proceeded onwards, stopping and listening with anxious attention at every step he took, convinced Franz he expected the arrival of some person. By a sort of instinctive impulse, Franz withdrew as much as possible behind his pillar. About ten feet from the spot where himself and the stranger were placed, the roof had given way, leaving a large round aperture, through which might be

seen the blue vault of heaven thickly studded with stars. Around this opening, which had, possibly, for ages permitted a free entrance to the brilliant moonbeams that now illumined the vast pile, grew a quantity of creeping plants, whose delicate green branches stood out in bold relief against the clear azure of the firmament, while large masses of thick, strong fibrous shoots forced their way through the chasm, and hung floating to and fro like so many waving strings. The person whose mysterious arrival had attracted the attention of Franz stood in a kind of half-light, that rendered it impossible to distinguish his features, although his dress was easily made out. He wore a large brown mantle, one fold of which, thrown over his left shoulder, served likewise to mask the lower part of his countenance, while the upper part was completely hidden by his broad-brimmed hat. The lower part of his dress was more distinctly visible by the bright rays of the moon, which, entering through the broken ceiling, shed their refulgent beams on feet cased in elegantly-made boots of polished leather, over which descended fashionably-cut trousers of black cloth.

From the imperfect means Franz had of judging, he could only come to one conclusion—that the individual whom he was thus watching certainly belonged to no inferior station of life. Some few minutes had elapsed, and the stranger began to show manifest signs of impatience, when a slight noise was heard outside the aperture in the roof, and almost immediately a dark shadow seemed to obstruct the flood of light that had entered it, and the figure of a man was clearly seen gazing with eager scrutiny on the immense space beneath him; then, as his eye caught sight of the individual in the mantle, he grasped a floating mass of thickly-matted boughs, and glided down by their help to within three or four feet of the ground, and then leaped lightly on his feet. The man who had performed this daring act with so much indifference wore the costume of Transtevere.

glad of an opportunity of making an example."—"But Peppino did not even belong to my band; he was merely a poor shepherd, whose only crime consisted in furnishing us with provisions."

"Which makes him your accomplice to all intents and purposes; but mark the distinction with which he is treated; instead of being knocked on the head, as you would be if once they caught hold of you, he is simply sentenced to be guillotined, by which means, too, the amusements of the day are diversified, and there is a spectacle to please every spectator."

"Without reckoning the wholly unexpected one I am preparing to surprise them with."

"My good friend," said the man in the cloak, "excuse me for saying that you seem to me precisely in the mood to commit some wild or extravagant act."—"Perhaps I am; but one thing I have resolved on, and that is, to stop at nothing to restore a poor devil to liberty, who has got into this scrape solely from having served me. I should hate and despise myself as a coward, did I desert the brave fellow in his present extremity."

"And what do you mean to do?"—"To surround the scaffold with twenty of my best men, who, at a signal from me, will rush forward directly Peppino is brought for execution, and, by the assistance of their stiletos, drive back the guard, and carry off the prisoner."

"That seems to me as hazardous as uncertain, and convinces me my scheme is far better than yours."

"And what is your excellency's project?"—"Just this! I will so advantageously bestow 2,000 piastres, that the person receiving them shall obtain a respite till next year for Peppino; and during that year, another skilfully placed 1,000 piastres shall afford him the means of escaping from his prison."

"And do you feel sure of succeeding?"

"*Pardieu!*" exclaimed the man in the cloak, suddenly expressing himself in French.

"What did your excellency say?" inquired the other.—"I said, my good fellow, that I would do more single-handed by the means of gold, than you and all your troupe could effect, with stiletos, pistols, carbines, and blunderbuses included. Leave me, then, to act, and have no fears for the result."

"At least, there can be no harm in myself and party being in readiness, in case your excellency should fail."—"None whatever. Take what precautions you please, if it is any satisfaction to you to do so; but rely upon my obtaining the reprieve I seek."

"Remember, the execution is fixed for the day after to-morrow, and that you have but one day to work in."—"And what then? Is not a day divided into twenty-four hours, each hour into sixty minutes, and every minute sub-divided into sixty seconds? Now in 86,400 seconds very many things can be done."

"And how shall I know whether your excellency has succeeded or not?"

"Oh! that is very easily arranged; I have engaged the three lower windows at the *Café Rospoli*; should I have obtained the requisite pardon for Peppino, the two outside windows will be hung with yellow damasks, and the centre with white, having a large cross in red marked on it."

"And whom will you employ to carry the reprieve to the officer directing the execution?"—"Send one of your men disguised as a penitent friar, and I will give it to him; his dress will procure him the means of approach."

ing the scaffold itself, and will deliver the official order to the officer, who, in his turn, will hand it to the executioner ; in the meantime, it will be as well to acquaint Peppino with what we have determined on, if it be only to prevent his dying of fear or losing his senses, because in either case a very useless expense will have been incurred."

"Your excellency," said the man, "you are fully persuaded of my entire devotion to you, are you not?"—"Nay, I flatter myself that there can be no doubt of it," replied the cavalier in the cloak.

"Well, then, only fulfil your promise of rescuing Peppino, and henceforward you shall receive not only devotedness, but the most absolute obedience from myself and those under me that one human being can render to another."

"Have a care how far you pledge yourself, my good friend, for I may remind you of your promise at some, perhaps, not very distant period, when I, in my turn, may require your aid and influence."—"Let that day come sooner or later, your excellency will find me what I have found you in this my heavy trouble ; and if from the other end of the world you but write me word to do such or such a thing, conclude it done, for done it shall be, on the word and faith of——"

"Hush !" interrupted the stranger ; "I hear a noise."

"Tis some travellers, who are visiting the Colosseum by torchlight."

"Twere better we should not be seen together ; those guides are nothing but spies, and might possibly recognize you ; and, however I may be honoured by your friendship, my worthy friend, if once the extent of our intimacy were known, I am sadly afraid both my reputation and credit would suffer thereby."

"Well, then, if you obtain the reprieve?"

"The middle window at the Café Rospoli will be hung with white damask, bearing on it a red cross."—"And if you fail?"

his features, from his being either wrapped in his mantle or obscured by the shadow, the tones of his voice had made too powerful an impression on him the first time he heard them for him ever again to forget them, hear them when or where he might. It was more especially when speaking in a manner half-jesting, half-bitter, that Franz's ear recalled most vividly the deep, sonorous, yet well-pitched voice, that had spoken to him in the grotto of Monte-Cristo, and which he heard for the second time amid the darkness and ruined grandeur of the Colosseum! And the more he thought, the more entire was his conviction, that the individual in the mantle was no other than his former host and entertainer, "Sinbad the Sailor."

Under any other circumstances, Franz would have found it impossible to resist his extreme curiosity to know more of so singular a personage, and with that intent have sought to renew their short acquaintance; but in the present instance, the confidential nature of the conversation he had overheard made him, with propriety, judge that his appearance at such a time would be anything but agreeable. As we have seen, therefore, he permitted his former host to retire without attempting a recognition; but fully promising himself a rich indemnity for his present forbearance should chance afford him another opportunity. In vain did Franz endeavour to forget the many perplexing thoughts which assailed him; in vain did he court the refreshment of sleep. Slumber refused to visit his eyelids, and his night was passed in feverish contemplation of the chain of circumstances tending to prove the individuality of the mysterious visitant to the Colosseum and the inhabitant of the grotto of Monte-Cristo; and the more he thought, the firmer grew his opinion on the subject. Worn out at length, he fell asleep at daybreak, and did not awake till late. Like a genuine Frenchman, Albert had employed his time in arranging for the evening's diversion; he had sent to engage a box at the Teatro Argentino, and Franz, having a number of letters to write, relinquished the carriage to Albert for the whole of the day. At five o'clock Albert returned, delighted with his day's work; he had been occupied in leaving his letters of introduction, and had received in return more invitations to balls and *soirées* than it would be possible for him to fulfil; besides this, he had seen (as he called it) all the remarkable sights at Rome. Yes, in a single day he had accomplished what his more reflective companion would have taken weeks to effect. Neither had he neglected to ascertain the name of the piece to be played that night at the Teatro Argentino, and also what performers appeared in it.

The opera of "Parisina" was announced for representation, and the principal actors were Coselli, Moriani, and La Spech. The young men, therefore, had reason to consider themselves fortunate in having the opportunity of hearing one of the best works by the composer of "Lucia di Lammermoor," supported by three of the most renowned vocalists of Italy. Albert had never been able to endure the Italian theatres, with their orchestras from which it is impossible to see, and the absence of balconies, or open boxes; all these defects pressed hard on a man who had had his stall at the Opera Buffa, and his share in the omnibus-box at the Italian Opera. Still, in despite of this, Albert displayed his most dazzling and effective costume each time he visited the theatres; but, alas! his *recherchée* toilette was wholly thrown away; and one of the most worthy representatives of Parisian fashion had to carry with him the mortifying reflection of having nearly overrun Italy without meeting with a single adventure.

Sometimes Albert would affect to make a joke of his want of success; but internally he was deeply wounded, and his self-love immensely piqued, to think that Albert de Morcerf, the most admired and most sought after of any young person of his day, should thus be passed over, and merely have his labour for his pains. And the thing was so much the more annoying, as, according to the characteristic modesty of a Frenchman, Albert had quitted Paris with the full conviction that he had only to show himself in Italy to carry all before him, and that upon his return he should astonish the Parisian world with the recital of his numerous love-affairs. Alas ! poor Albert, none of those interesting adventures fell in his way ; the lovely Genoese, Florentine, and Neapolitan females were all faithful, if not to their husbands, at least to their lovers, and thought not of changing even for the splendid appearance of Albert de Morcerf ; and all he gained was the painful conviction that the ladies of Italy have this advantage over those of France, that they are faithful even in their infidelity. Yet he could not restrain a hope, that in Italy, as elsewhere, there might be an exception to the general rule. Albert, besides being an elegant, well-looking young man, was also possessed of considerable talent and ability ; moreover, he was a viscount—a recently-created one, certainly—but in the present day it is not necessary to go as far back as Noah in tracing a descent, and a genealogical tree is equally estimated, whether dated from 1399 or merely 1815 ; but to crown all these advantages, Albert de Morcerf commanded an income of 50,000 livres (£2,000), a more than sufficient sum to render him a personage of considerable importance in Paris. It was therefore no small mortification to him to have visited most of the principal cities in Italy without having excited the most trifling observation. Albert, however, hoped to indemnify himself for all these slights and indifferences during the Carnival, knowing full well that among

all so much engrossed with themselves, their lovers, or their own thoughts, that they had not so much as remarked him or the pointing of his glass.

The truth was, that the anticipated pleasures of the Carnival, with the "holy week" that was to succeed it, so filled every fair breast, as to prevent the least attention being bestowed even on the business of the stage; the actors made their entries and exits unobserved or unthought of; at certain conventional moments, the spectators would suddenly cease their conversation, or rouse themselves from their musings to listen to some brilliant effort of Moriani's, a well-executed recitative by Coselli, or to join in loud applause at the wonderful powers of La Spech; but that momentary excitement over, they quickly relapsed into their former state of pre-occupation or interesting conversation. Towards the close of the first act, the door of a box which had been hitherto vacant was opened; a lady entered to whom Franz had been introduced in Paris, where, indeed, he had imagined she still was. The quick eye of Albert caught the involuntary start with which his friend beheld the new arrival, and turning to him, he said hastily—"Do you know the female who has just entered the box?"

"Yes; what do you think of her?"—"Oh, she is perfectly lovely—what a complexion! And such magnificent hair! Is she French?"—"No; a Venetian."—"And her name is?"—"Countess G——"

"Ah! I know her by name," exclaimed Albert; "she is said to possess as much wit and cleverness as beauty! I was to have been presented to her when I met her at Madame Villefort's ball."

"Shall I assist you in repairing your negligence?" asked Franz.

"My dear fellow, are you really on such good terms with her as to venture to take me to her box?"—"Why, I have only had the honour of being in her society and conversing with her three or four times in my life; but you know that even such an acquaintance as that might warrant my doing what you ask." At this instant, the countess perceived Franz, and graciously waved her hand to him, to which he replied by a respectful inclination of the head. "Upon my word," said Albert, "you seem to be on excellent terms with the beautiful countess!"

"You are mistaken in thinking so," returned Franz, calmly; "but you merely fall into the same error which leads so many of our countrymen to commit the most egregious blunders, I mean that of judging the habits and customs of Italy and Spain by our Parisian notions; believe me, nothing is more fallacious than to form any estimate of the degree of intimacy you may suppose existing among persons by the familiar terms they seem upon; there is a similarity of feeling at this instant between ourselves and the countess—nothing more."—"Is there indeed, my good fellow? Pray tell me is it sympathy of heart?"

"No; of taste!" continued Franz, gravely.

"And in what manner has this congeniality of mind been evinced?"

"By the countess's visiting the Colosseum, as we did last night, by moonlight, and nearly alone."—"You were with her, then?"

"I was."—"And what did you say to her?"

"Oh! we talked mutually of the illustrious dead of whom that magnificent ruin is a glorious monument!"

"Upon my word!" cried Albert, "you must have been a very entertaining companion alone, or all but alone, with a beautiful woman in such a place of sentiment as the Colosseum, and yet to find nothing better to talk about than the dead! All I can say is, if ever I should get such a chance, the living should be my theme."—"And you will probably find your theme ill-chosen."

"But," said Albert, breaking in upon his discourse, "never mind the past, let us only remember the present ! Are you not going to keep your promise of introducing me to the fair subject of our remarks ?"—"Certainly, directly the curtain falls on the stage !"

"What a confounded time this first act is about ! I believe, on my soul, that they never mean to finish it !"—"Oh, yes ! they will ! only listen to that charming finale ! How exquisitely Coselli sings his part !"

"But what an awkward, inelegant fellow he is !"

"Well, then, what do you say to La Spech ? did you ever see anything more perfect than her acting ?"—"Why, you know, my dear fellow, when one has been accustomed to Malibran and Sontag, these kind of singers don't make the same impression on you they perhaps do on others."

"At least, you must admire Moriani's style and execution."—"I never fancied men of his dark, ponderous appearance singing with a voice like a woman's."

"My good friend," said Franz, turning to him, while Albert continued to point his glass at every box in the theatre, "you seem determined not to approve ; you are really too difficult to please." The curtain at length fell on the performances, to the infinite satisfaction of the Viscount de Morcerf, who seized his hat, rapidly passed his fingers through his hair, arranged his cravat and wristbands, and signified to Franz that he was waiting for him to lead the way. Franz, who had mutely interrogated the countess, and received from her a gracious smile in token that he would be welcome, sought not to retard the gratification of Albert's eager impatience, but commenced at once the tour of the house, closely followed by Albert, who availed himself of the few minutes it occupied to reach the opposite side of the theatre to settle the height and smoothness of his collar and to arrange the lappets of his coat ; this important task was just completed as

they arrived at the countess's box : at the signal, the door was immediately

attire. Behind her, but in deep shadow, was the outline of a male figure ; but the features of this latter personage it was not possible to distinguish. Franz could not forbear breaking in upon the apparently interesting conversation passing between the countess and Albert, to inquire of the former if she knew who was the fair Albanaise opposite, since beauty such as hers was well worthy of being remarked by either sex. "All I can tell you about her," replied the countess, "is, that she has been at Rome since the beginning of the season ; for I saw her where she now sits the very first night of the theatre's opening, and since then she has never missed a performance. Sometimes accompanied by the individual who is with her, and at others merely attended by a black servant."

"And what do you think of her personal appearance ?"—"Oh, I consider her perfectly lovely—she is just my idea of what Medora must have been."

Franz and the countess exchanged a smile, and then the latter resumed her conversation with Albert, while Franz returned to his previous survey of the house and company. The curtain rose on the ballet, which was one of those excellent specimens of the Italian school, admirably arranged and put on the stage by Henri, who has established for himself a great reputation throughout Italy for his taste and skill in the chorographic art—one of those masterly productions of grace, method, and elegance in which the whole *corps de ballet*, from the principal dancers to the humblest supernumerary, are all engaged on the stage at the same time ; and a hundred and fifty persons may be seen exhibiting the same attitude, or elevating the same arm or leg with a simultaneous movement, that would lead you to suppose but one mind, one act of volition, influenced the moving mass : the ballet was called "*Poliska*." However much the ballet might have claimed his attention, Franz was too deeply occupied with the beautiful Greek to take any note of it, while she seemed to experience an almost childlike delight in watching it ; her eager, animated looks, contrasting strongly with the utter indifference of her companion, who, during the whole time the piece lasted, never even moved, spite of the furious crashing din produced by the trumpets, cymbals, and Chinese bells, made to produce their loudest sound from the orchestra. The apathetic companion of the fair Greek took no heed of the deafening sounds that prevailed, but was, as far as appearances might be trusted, enjoying soft repose and bright celestial dreams. The ballet at length came to a close, and the curtain fell amidst the loud, unanimous plaudits of an enthusiastic and delighted audience.

Owing to the very judicious plan of dividing the two acts of the opera with a ballet, the pauses between the performances are very short ; the singers in the opera having time to repose themselves and change their costume, when necessary, while the dancers are executing their pirouettes, and exhibiting their graceful steps. The overture to the second act began ; and at the first sound of the leader's bow across his violin, Franz observed the sleeper slowly arise and approach the Greek girl, who turned round to say a few words to him, and then, leaning forward again on her box, she became as absorbed as before in what was going on. The countenance of the person who had addressed her remained so completely in the shade, that, though Franz tried his utmost, he could not distinguish a single feature. The curtain drew up, and the attention of Franz was attracted by the actors ; and his eyes quitted their gaze at the box containing the Greek girl and her strange companion to watch the business of the stage.

Most of my readers are aware that the second act of "*Parisina*" opens

with the celebrated and effective duet in which Parisina, while sleeping, betrays to Azzo the secret of her love for Ugo. The injured husband goes through all the workings of jealousy, until conviction seizes on his mind, and then, in a frenzy of rage and indignation, he awakens his guilty wife to tell her he knows her guilt, and to threaten her with his vengeance. This duet is one of the finest conceptions that has ever emanated from the fruitful pen of Donizetti. Franz now listened to it for the third time ; yet its notes, so tenderly expressive and fearfully grand, as the wretched husband and wife give vent to their different griefs and passions, thrilled through the soul of Franz with an effect equal to his first emotions upon hearing it. Excited beyond his usual calm demeanour, Franz rose with the audience, and was about to join the loud enthusiastic applause that followed ; but suddenly his purpose was arrested, his hands fell by his sides, and the half-uttered "bravos" expired on his lips. The occupant of the box in which the Greek girl sat appeared to share the universal admiration that prevailed, for he left his seat to stand up in the front, so that, his countenance being fully revealed, Franz had no difficulty in recognising him as the mysterious inhabitant of Monte-Cristo, and the very same individual he had encountered the preceding evening in the ruins of the Colosseum, and whose voice and figure had seemed so familiar to him. All doubt of his identity was now at an end : his singular host evidently resided at Rome. The surprise and agitation occasioned by this full confirmation of Franz's former suspicion had no doubt imparted a corresponding expression to his features ; for the countess, after gazing with a puzzled look on his speaking countenance, burst into a fit of laughter, and begged to know what had happened. "Madame la Comtesse," returned Franz, totally unheeding her raillery, "I asked you a short time since if you knew any particulars respecting the Albanian lady opposite ; I must now beseech you to inform me who and what is her husband ?"

he could but allow that if anything was likely to induce belief in the existence of vampires, it would be the presence of such a man as the mysterious personage before him.—“I must positively find out who and what he is,” said Franz, rising from his seat.—“No, no !” cried the countess, “you must not leave me. I depend upon you to escort me home. Oh, indeed, I cannot permit you to go.”

“Is it possible,” whispered Franz, “that you entertain any fear?”

“I’ll tell you,” answered the countess. “Byron had the most perfect belief in the existence of vampires, and even assured me he had seen some. The description he gave me perfectly corresponds with the features and character of the man before us. Oh ! it is the exact personification of what I have been led to expect. The coal black hair, large bright glittering eyes, in which a wild, unearthly fire seems burning,—the same ghastly paleness. Then observe, too, that the very female he has with him is altogether unlike all others of her sex. She is a foreigner—a stranger. Nobody knows who she is, or where she comes from. No doubt she belongs to the same horrible race he does, and is, like himself, a dealer in magical arts. I entreat of you not to go near him—at least to-night ; and if to-morrow your curiosity still continues as great, pursue your researches if you will ; but to night you neither can nor shall. For that purpose I mean to keep you all to myself.” Franz protested he could not defer his pursuit till the following day, for many reasons. “Listen to me,” said the countess, “and do not be so very headstrong. I am going home. I have a party at my house to-night, and therefore cannot possibly remain till the conclusion of the opera. Now, I cannot for one instant believe you so devoid of gallantry as to refuse a lady your escort when she even condescends to ask you for it.”

There was nothing else left for Franz to do but to take up his hat, open the door of the *loge*, and offer the countess his arm. It was quite evident, by the countess’s manner, that her uneasiness was not feigned ; and Franz himself could not resist a species of superstitious dread—so much the stronger in him, as it arose from a variety of corroborating recollections, while the terror of the countess sprang from an instinctive feeling, originally created in her mind by the wild tales she had listened to till she believed them truths. Franz could even feel her arm tremble as he assisted her into the carriage. Upon arriving at her hotel, Franz perceived that she had deceived him when she spoke of expecting company ; on the contrary, her own return before the appointed hour seemed greatly to astonish the domestics. “Excuse my little subterfuge,” said the countess, in reply to her companion’s half-reproachful observation on the subject ; “but that horrid man had made me feel quite uncomfortable, and I longed to be alone, that I might compose my startled mind.” Franz essayed to smile. “Nay,” said she, “smile not ; it ill accords with the expression of your countenance, and I am sure it springs not from your heart. However, promise me one thing.”

“What is it ?”—“Promise me, I say.”

“I will do anything you desire, except relinquish my determination of finding out who this man is. I have more reasons than you can imagine for desiring to know who he is, from whence he came, and whither he is going.”

“Where he comes from I am ignorant ; but I can readily tell you where he is going to, and that is down below, without the least doubt.”

“Let us only speak of the promise you wished me to make,” said Franz.

“Well, then, you must give me your word to return immediately to your

hotel, and make no attempt to follow this man to-night. There are certain affinities between the persons we quit and those we meet afterwards. For heaven's sake, do not serve as a conductor between that man and me. Pursue your chase after him to-morrow as eagerly as you please ; but never bring him near me, if you would not see me die of terror. And now, good-night : retire to your apartments, and try to sleep away all recollections of this evening. For my own part, I am quite sure I shall not be able to close my eyes." So saying, the countess quitted Franz, leaving him unable to decide whether she were merely amusing herself at his expense, or that her fears and agitations were genuine.

Upon his return to the hotel, Franz found Albert in his dressing-gown and slippers, listlessly extended on a sofa, smoking a cigar. "My dear fellow !" cried he, springing up, "is it really you ? Why, I did not expect to see you before to-morrow."—"My dear Albert !" replied Franz, "I am glad of this opportunity to tell you, once and for ever, that you entertain a most erroneous notion concerning Italian females. I should have thought the continual failures you have met with in all your own love affairs might have taught you better by this time."

"Upon my soul ! these women would puzzle the very devil to read them aright. Why, here—they give you their hand—they press yours in return—they keep up a whispering conversation—permit you to accompany them home ! Why, if a Parisian were to indulge in a quarter of these marks of flattering attention, her reputation would be gone for ever."—"And the very reason why the females of this fine country put so little restraint on their words and actions, is because they live so much in public, and have really nothing to conceal. Besides, you must have perceived that the countess was really alarmed."

"At what ? at the sight of that respectable gentleman sitting opposite to us in the same *loge* as the lovely Greek girl ? Now, for my part, I met

Franz looked at Albert as though he had not much confidence in the suggestions of his imagination. "I tell you what, M. Franz!" cried Albert; "you deserve to be called out for such a misgiving and incredulous glance as that you were pleased to bestow on me just now."—"And I promise to give you the satisfaction of a gentleman if your scheme turns out as ingenious as you assert."

"Well, then, hearken to me."—"I listen."

"You agree, do you not, that obtaining a carriage is out of the question?"

—"I do."—"Neither can we procure horses?"

"True; we have offered any sums, but have failed."

"Well, now, what do you say to a cart? I dare say such a thing might be had."—"Very possibly."—"And a pair of oxen?"

"As easily found as the cart."—"Then you see, my good fellow, with a cart and a couple of oxen our business can be managed. The cart must be tastefully ornamented; and if you and I dress ourselves as Neapolitan reapers, we may get up a striking tableau, after the manner of that splendid picture by Leopold Robert. It would add greatly to the effect if the countess would join us in the costume of a peasant from Puzzoli or Sorrento. Our group would then be quite complete, more especially as the countess is quite beautiful enough to represent the 'Mother with Child.'"

"Well," said Franz, "this time, M. Albert, I am bound to give you credit for having hit upon a most capital idea."

"And quite a national one, too," replied Albert with gratified pride. "A mere masque borrowed from our own festivities. Ha! ha! Messieurs les Romains; you thought to make us, unhappy strangers, trot at the heels of your processions, like so many lazzaroni, because no carriages or horses are to be had in your beggarly city. But you don't know us; when we can't have one thing we invent another."

"And have you communicated your triumphant idea to any person?"

"Only to our host. Upon my return home I sent to desire he would come to me, and I then explained to him what I wished to procure. He assured me that nothing would be easier than to furnish all I desired. One thing I was sorry for: when I bade him have the horns of the oxen gilded, he told me there would not be time, as it would require three days to effect that; so you see we must do without this little superfluity."

—"And where is he now?"—"Who?"—"Our host."

"Gone out in search of our equipage: by to-morrow it might be too late."—"Then he will be able to give us an answer to-night."

"Oh, I expect him every minute." At this instant the door opened, and the head of Maître Pastrini appeared. "*Permesso?*" inquired he.

"Certainly—certainly," cried Franz. "Come in mine host."—"Now, then," asked Albert, eagerly; "have you found the desired cart and oxen?"

"Better than that!" replied the Maître Pastrini, with the air of a man perfectly well satisfied with himself.

"Take care, my worthy host," said Albert, "*better* is a sure enemy to *well*."—"Let your excellencies only leave the matter to me," returned Maître Pastrini, in a tone indicative of unbounded self-confidence.

"But what *have* you done?" asked Franz. "Speak out, there's a worthy fellow."—"Your excellencies are aware," responded the landlord, swelling with importance, "that the count of Monte-Cristo is living on the same floor with yourselves!"

"I should think we did know it," exclaimed Albert, "since it is owing to that circumstance that we are packed into these small rooms, like two poor students in the back streets of Paris."—"Well, then, the count of

mazzolato, the second culprit, *decapitato*. The prayers of all good Christians are entreated for these unfortunate men, that it may please God to awaken them to a sense of their guilt, and to grant them a hearty and sincere repentance for their crimes."

This was precisely what Franz had heard the evening before in the ruins of the Colosseum. No part of the programme differed—the names of the condemned persons—their crimes and mode of punishment—all agreed with his previous information. In all probability, therefore, the Transtevere was no other than the bandit Luigi Vampa himself, and the man shrouded in the mantle the same he had known as "Sinbad the Sailor," but who, no doubt, was still pursuing his philanthropic expedition in Rome as he had already done at Porto-Vecchio and Tunis. Time was getting on, however, and Franz deemed it advisable to awaken Albert; but at the moment he prepared to proceed to his chamber, his friend entered the saloon in perfect costume for the day. The anticipated delights of the Carnival had so run in his head as to make him leave his pillow long before his usual hour. "Now, my excellent Maître Pastrini," said Franz, addressing his landlord, "since we are both ready, do you think we may proceed at once to visit the count of Monte-Cristo?"—"Most assuredly," replied he. "The count of Monte-Cristo is always an early riser; and I can answer for his having been up these two hours."

"Then you really consider we shall not be intruding if we pay our respects to him directly?"—"Oh, I am quite sure. I will take all the blame on myself if you find I have led you into an error."

"Well, then, if it be so; are you ready, Albert?"—"Perfectly."

"Let us go and return our best thanks for his courtesy."—"Yes, let us do so." The landlord preceded the friends across the landing, which was all that separated them from the apartments of the count, rang at the bell, and upon the door being opened by a servant, said—"I Signori

its hinges, and almost immediately afterwards the tapestry was drawn aside, and the owner of all these riches stood before the two young men. Albert instantly rose to meet him, but Franz remained, in a manner, spell-bound on his chair, for in the person of him who had just entered he recognized not only the mysterious visitant to the Colosseum, and the occupant of the *loge* at the Salle Argentino, but also his singular host of Monte-Cristo.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LA MAZZOLATA.

"GENTLEMEN," said the count of Monte-Cristo as he entered, "I pray you excuse me for suffering my visit to be anticipated ; but I feared to disturb you by presenting myself earlier at your apartments ; besides, you sent me word you would come to me, and I have held myself at your disposal."

"Franz and I have to thank you a thousand times, M. le Comte," returned Albert ; "you extricated us from a great dilemma, and we were on the point of inventing some very fantastic vehicle when your friendly invitation reached us."—"Indeed !" returned the count, motioning the two young men to sit down. "It was the fault of that blockhead Pastrini, that I did not sooner assist you in your distress. He did not mention a syllable of your embarrassment to me, when he knows that, alone and isolated as I am, I seek every opportunity of making the acquaintance of my neighbours. As soon as I learned I could in any way assist you, I most eagerly seized the opportunity of offering my services." The two young men bowed. Franz had, as yet, found nothing to say ; he had adopted no determination ; and as nothing in the count's manner manifested the wish that he should recognize him, he did not know whether to make any allusion to the past, or wait until he had more proof ; besides, although sure it was he who had been in the box the previous evening, he could not be equally positive that he was the man he had seen at the Colosseum. He resolved, therefore, to let things take their course without making any direct overture to the count. Besides, he had this advantage over him, he was master of his secret, whilst he had no hold on Franz, who had nothing to conceal. However, he resolved to lead the conversation to a subject which might possibly clear up his doubts.

"M. le Comte," said he, "you have offered us places in your carriage, and at your windows of the Rospoli Palace. Can you tell us where we can obtain a sight of the Place del Popolo?"—"Ah !" said the count, negligently, looking attentively at Morcerf, "is there not something like an execution upon the Place del Popolo?"

"Yes," returned Franz, finding that the count was coming to the point he wished.—"Stay, I think I told my steward yesterday to attend to this ; perhaps I can render you this slight service also." He extended his hand, and rang the bell thrice. "Did you ever occupy yourself," said he to Franz, "with the employment of time and the means of simplifying the summoning your servants ? I have : when I ring once, it is for my valet ; twice, for my maître d'hôtel ; thrice, for my steward : thus I do not waste a minute or a word. Here he is !" A man of about five-and-forty to fifty entered, exactly resembling the smuggler who had introduced Franz into the cavern ; but he did not appear to recognize him. It was evident he had his orders. "M. Bertuccio," said the count, "have you procured

hotel and make no attempt to follow this man to-night. There are certain affinities between the persons we quit and those we meet afterwards. For heaven's sake, do not serve as a conductor between that man and me. Pursue your chase after him to-morrow as eagerly as you please; but never bring him near me, if you would not see me die of terror. And now, good-night—return to your apartments, and try to sleep away all recollections of this evening. For my own part, I am quite sure I shall not be able to close my eyes." So saying, the countess quitted Franz, leaving him unable to decide whether she were merely amusing herself at his expense, or that her fears and agitations were genuine.

Upon his return to the hotel, Franz found Albert in his dressing-gown and slippers, listlessly extended on a sofa, smoking a cigar. "My dear Franz," cried he, springing up, "is it really you? Why, I did not expect to see you before to-morrow."—"My dear Albert!" replied Franz, "I am glad of the opportunity to tell you, once and for ever, that you entertain a most erroneous notion concerning Italian females. I should have thought the numerous failures you have met with in all your own love affairs might have taught you better by this time."

"Upon my soul," these women would puzzle the very devil to read them aright. Why, here—they give you their hand—they press yours in return—they keep up a whispering conversation—permit you to accompany them home. Why, if a Parisian were to indulge in a quarter of these marks of flattering attention, her reputation would be gone for ever."—"And the very reason why the females of this fine country put so little restraint on their words and actions, is because they live so much in public, and have really nothing to conceal. Besides, you must have perceived that the countess was really alarmed."

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"Well, then, hearken to me."—"I listen."

"You agree, do you not, that obtaining a carriage is out of the question?"

—"I do."—"Neither can we procure horses?"

"True; we have offered any sums, but have failed."

"Well, now, what do you say to a cart? I dare say such a thing might be had."—"Very possibly."—"And a pair of oxen?"

"As easily found as the cart."—"Then you see, my good fellow, with a cart and a couple of oxen our business can be managed. The cart must be tastefully ornamented; and if you and I dress ourselves as Neapolitan reapers, we may get up a striking tableau, after the manner of that splendid picture by Leopold Robert. It would add greatly to the effect if the countess would join us in the costume of a peasant from Puzzoli or Sorrento. Our group would then be quite complete, more especially as the countess is quite beautiful enough to represent the 'Mother with Child.'"

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"But what *have* you done?" asked Franz. "Speak out, there's a worthy fellow."—"Your excellencies are aware," responded the landlord, swelling with importance, "that the count of Monte-Cristo is living on the same floor with yourselves!"

"I should think we did know it," exclaimed Albert, "since it is owing to that circumstance that ———— tucked into these small rooms, like two or students in the Paris."—"Well, then, the count of

Monte-Cristo, hearing of the dilemma in which you are placed, has sent to offer you seats in his carriage and two places at his windows in the Palace Rospoli." The friends looked at each other with unutterable surprise.

"But do you think," asked Franz, "that we ought to accept such offers from a perfect stranger?"—"What sort of person is this count of Monte-Cristo?" asked Franz of his host. "A very great nobleman, but whether Maltese or Sicilian I cannot exactly say; but this I know, that he is noble as a Borghese and rich as a gold-mine."—"It seems to me," said Franz, speaking in an undertone to Albert, "that if this individual merited the high panegyrics of our landlord, he would have conveyed his invitation through another channel, and not permitted it to be brought to us in this unceremonious way. He would have written—or——"

At this instant some one knocked at the door. "Come in!" said Franz. A servant, wearing a livery of considerable style and richness, appeared at the threshold, and placing two cards in the landlord's hands, who forthwith presented them to the two young men, he said, "Please to deliver these, from M. le comte de Monte-Cristo, to M. le vicomte Albert de Morcerf and M. Franz Epinay. M. le comte de Monte-Cristo," continued the servant, "begs these gentlemen's permission to wait upon them as their neighbour, and he will be honoured by an intimation of what time they will please to receive him."

"Faith, Franz," whispered Albert, "there is not much to find fault with here."—"Tell the count," replied Franz, "that we will do ourselves the pleasure of calling on him." The servant bowed and retired.

"That is what I call an elegant mode of attack," said Albert. "You were quite correct in what you stated, Maître Pastrini. The count of Monte-Cristo is unquestionably a man of first-rate breeding and knowledge of the world."

was to summon his landlord, who presented himself with his ac-
obsequiousness.

Maitre Pastrini," asked Franz, "is not some execution appointed
place to-day?"—"Yes, your excellency; but if your reason for
that you may procure a window to view it from, you are much

no!" answered Franz, "I had no such intention; and even if I
wish to witness the spectacle, I might have done so from Monte
could I not?"

exclaimed mine host, "I did not think it likely your excellence
ve chosen to mingle with such a rabble as are always collected on
which, indeed, they consider as exclusively belonging to them-

possibly I may not go," answered Franz; "but in case I feel dis-
sive me some particulars of to-day's executions."

at particulars would your excellency like to hear?"—"Why, the
of persons condemned to suffer, their names, and description of
h they are to die."

happens just lucky, your excellence! Only a few minutes ago
ught me the *tavolettas*."—"What are they?"

of wooden tablets hung up at the corners of streets the evening
execution, on which is pasted up a paper containing the names
ndemned persons, their crimes, and mode of punishment. The
r so publicly announcing all this is, that all good and faithful
s may offer up their prayers for the unfortunate culprits, and,
, beseech of Heaven to grant them a sincere repentance."—
ese tablets are brought to you that you may add your prayers to
the faithful, are they?" asked Franz, somewhat incredulously.

lear, no, your excellence; I have not time for anybody's affairs
own and those of my honourable guests; but I make an agree-
h the man who pastes up the papers, and he brings them to me
uld the playbills, that in case any person staying at my hotel
ke to witness an execution, he may obtain every requisite infor-
concerning the time and place, &c."—"Upon my word, that is
icate attention on your part, Maitre Pastrini," cried Franz.

r, your excellence," returned the landlord, chuckling and rubbing
s with infinite complacency, "I think I may take upon myself to
lect nothing to deserve the support and patronage of the noble
o this poor hotel."—"I see that plainly enough, my most excel-
; and you may rely upon my repeating so striking a proof of your
to your guests wherever I go. Meanwhile, oblige me by a sight
these *tavolettas*."

ning can be easier than to comply with your excellency's wish,"
landlord, opening the door of the chamber; "I have caused one
ced on the landing, close by your apartment." Then, taking the
on the wall, he handed it to Franz, who read as follows:—
e public is informed that on Wednesday, February 23rd, being the
of the Carnival, two executions will take place in the Place del
by order of the Tribunal de la Rota, of two individuals, named
Rondola, and Peppino, otherwise called Rocca Priori; the former
ilty of the murder of a venerable and exemplary priest, named
sar Torlini, canon of the church of Saint-Jean-de-Latran; and the
nvicted of being an accomplice of the atrocious and sanguinary
Luigi Vampa, and his troupe. The first-named malefactor will be

"And, see, here it is," said the count. At the moment when Peppino arrived at the foot of the *mandara*, a penitent, who seemed to arrive late, forced his way through the soldiers, and, advancing to the chief of the brotherhood, gave him a folded paper. The piercing eye of Peppino had noticed all. The chief took the paper, unfolded it, and, raising his hand, "Heaven be praised ! and his Holiness also !" said he, in a loud voice ; "here is a pardon for one of the prisoners !"

"A pardon !" cried the people with one voice—"a pardon !" At this cry Andrea raised his head. "Pardon for whom ?" cried he.

Peppino remained breathless. "A pardon for Peppino, called Rocca Priori," said the principal friar. And he passed the paper to the officer commanding the carbineers, who read and returned it to him.

"For Peppino !" cried Andrea, who seemed aroused from the torpor in which he had been plunged. "Why for him and not for me ? We ought to die together. I was promised he should die with me. You have no right to put me to death alone. I will not die alone—I will not !" And he broke from the priests, struggling and raving like a wild beast, and striving desperately to break the cords that bound his hands. The executioner made a sign, and his assistant leaped from the scaffold and seized him. "What is passing ?" asked Franz of the count ; for, as all this occurred in the Roman dialect, he had not perfectly comprehended it. "Do you not see," returned the count, "that this human creature who is about to die is furious that his fellow-sufferer does not perish with him ? and, were he able, he would rather tear him to pieces with his teeth and nails than let him enjoy the life he himself is about to be deprived of. Oh, man, man ! race of crocodiles !" cried the count, extending his clenched hands towards the crowd, "how well do I recognise you there, and that at all times you are worthy of yourselves !" All this time Andrea and the two executioners were struggling on the ground, and he kept exclaiming, "He

unable to kill any one, because his hands are bound, wishes to see his companion in captivity perish. No, no—look, look !”

This recommendation was needless. Franz was fascinated by the horrible spectacle. The two assistants had borne Andrea to the scaffold, and there, spite of his struggles, his bites, and his cries, had forced him to his knees. During this time the executioner had raised his mace, and signed to them to get out of the way ; the criminal strove to rise, but, ere he had time, the mace fell on his left temple. A dull and heavy sound was heard, and the man dropped like an ox on his face, and then turned over on his back. The executioner let fall his mace, drew his knife, and with one stroke, opened his throat, and mounting on his stomach, stamped violently on it with his feet. At every stroke a jet of blood sprang from the wound.

This time Franz could sustain himself no longer, but sank, half fainting, into a seat. Albert, with his eyes closed, was standing grasping the window-curtains. The count was erect and triumphant, like the Avenging Angel !

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CARNIVAL AT ROME.

WHEN Franz recovered his senses, he saw Albert drinking a glass of water, of which his paleness showed he stood in great need, and the count, who was assuming his costume of *paillasse*. He glanced mechanically towards the place : all had disappeared—scaffold, executioners, victims ; nought remained but the people, full of noise and excitement. The bell of Monte Citorio, which only sounds on the pope's decease and the opening of the Carnival, was ringing a joyous peal. “ Well,” asked he of the count, “ what has, then, happened ? ”——“ Nothing,” replied the count ; “ only, as you see, the Carnival has commenced. Make haste and dress yourself.”——“ In reality,” said Franz, “ this horrible scene has passed away like a dream.”

“ It is but a dream—the nightmare that has disturbed you.”

“ Yes, that I have suffered ; but the culprit ? ”

“ That is a dream also ; only he has remained asleep, whilst you have awoke ; and who knows which of you is the most fortunate ? ”

“ But Peppino—what has become of him ? ”——“ Peppino is a lad of sense, who, unlike most men, who are furious if they pass unnoticed, was delighted to see that the general attention was directed towards his companion. He profited by this distraction to slip away amongst the crowd, without even thanking the worthy priests who accompanied him. Decidedly man is an ungrateful and egotistical animal. But dress yourself ; see, M. de Morcerf sets you the example.” Albert was in reality drawing on the satin pantaloons over his black trousers and varnished boots. “ Well, Albert,” said Franz, “ do you feel much inclined to join the revels ? Come, answer frankly.”——“ *Ma foi !* no,” returned Albert. “ But I am really glad to have seen such a sight ; and I understand what M. le Comte said—that when you have once habituated yourself to a similar spectacle, it is the only one that causes you any emotion.”

“ Without reflecting that this is the only moment in which you can study characters,” said the count ; “ on the steps of the scaffold death tears off the mask that has been worn through life, and the real visage is disclosed. It must be allowed Andrea was not very handsome, the hideous scoundrel ! Come, dress yourselves, gentlemen, dress yourselves.” Franz felt it would be ridiculous not to follow his two companions' example. He assumed his

costume, and fastened on his mask, that scarcely equalled the pallor of his own face. Their toilette finished, they descended ; the carriage awaited them at the door, filled with sweetmeats and bouquets. They fell into the line of carriages. It is difficult to form an idea of the perfect change that had taken place. Instead of the spectacle of gloomy and silent death, the Place del Popolo presented a spectacle of gay and noisy mirth and revelry. A crowd of masks flowed in from all sides, escaping from the doors, descending from the windows. From every street and every turn drove carriages filled with pierrots, harlequins, dominoes, marquises, Transteveres, knights, and peasants, screaming, fighting, gesticulating, whirling eggs filled with flour, confetti, nosegays, attacking, with their sarcasms and their missiles, friends and foes, companions and strangers, indiscriminately, without any one taking offence, or doing anything else than laugh. Franz and Albert were like men who, to drive away a violent sorrow, have recourse to wine, and who, as they drink and become intoxicated, feel a thick veil drawn between the past and the present. They saw, or rather continued to see, the image of what they had witnessed ; but little by little the general vertigo seized them, and they felt themselves obliged to take part in the noise and confusion. A handful of confetti that came from a neighbouring carriage, and which, whilst it covered Morcerf and his two companions with dust, pricked his neck and that portion of his face uncovered by his mask like a hundred pins, plunged him into the general combat, in which all the masks around him were engaged. He rose in his turn, and seizing handfuls of confetti and sweetmeats, with which the carriage was filled, cast them with all the force and address he was master of.

The strife had fairly commenced, and the recollection of what they had seen half an hour before was gradually effaced from the young men's minds, so much were they occupied by the gay and glittering procession they now beheld. As for the Count of Monte-Cristo, he had never for an

Odry's in *The Bear and the Pasha*; and the two footmen behind were dressed up as green monkeys, with spring masks, with which they made grimaces at every one who passed. Franz thanked the count for his attention. As for Albert, he was busily occupied throwing bouquets at a carriage full of Roman peasants that was passing near him. Unfortunately for him, the line of carriages moved on again, and whilst he descended the Place del Popolo, the other ascended towards the Palais de Vénise. "Ah! my dear fellow!" said he to Franz; "you did not see?"—"What?"

"There,—that calèche filled with Roman peasants."—"No."

"Well, I am convinced they are all charming women."

"How unfortunate you were masked, Albert!" said Franz; "here was an opportunity of making up for past disappointments."

"Oh!" replied he, half laughing, half serious; "I hope the Carnival will not pass without some amends in one shape or the other."

But, in spite of Albert's hope, the day passed unmarked by any incident, excepting meeting two or three times the calèche with the Roman peasants. At one of these encounters, accidentally or purposely, Albert's mask fell off. He instantly rose and cast the remainder of the bouquets into the carriage. Doubtless one of the charming females Albert had divined beneath their coquettish disguise was touched by his gallantry; for, in her turn, as the carriage of the two friends passed her, she threw a bunch of violets into it. Albert seized it, and as Franz had no reason to suppose it was addressed to him, he suffered Albert to retain it. Albert placed it in his button-hole, and the carriage went triumphantly on.

"Well," said Franz to him; "here is the commencement of an adventure."—"Laugh if you please—I really think so. So I will not abandon this bouquet."

"*Pardieu!*" returned Franz, laughing, "in token of your ingratitude." The jest, however, soon appeared to become earnest; for when Albert and Franz again encountered the carriage with the *contadini*, the one who had thrown the violets to Albert, clapped her hands when she beheld them in his button-hole. "Bravo! bravo!" said Franz; "things go wonderfully. Shall I leave you? Perhaps you would prefer being alone?"—"No," replied he; "I will not be caught like a fool at a first demonstration by a rendezvous beneath the clock, as they say at the opera-balls. If the fair peasant wishes to carry matters any further, we shall find her, or rather, she will find us to-morrow: then she will give me some sign or other, and I shall know what I have to do."

"On my word," said Franz, "you are wise as Nestor and prudent as Ulysses, and your fair Circe must be very skilful or very powerful if she succeed in changing you into a beast of any kind." Albert was right; the fair unknown had resolved, doubtless, to carry the intrigue no farther; for although the young men made several more turns, they did not again see the calèche, which had turned up one of the neighbouring streets. Then they returned to the Rospoli Palace; but the count and the blue domino had also disappeared; the two windows, hung with yellow damask, were still occupied by the persons whom the count had invited. At this moment the same bell that had proclaimed the commencement of the masquerade sounded the retreat. The file on the Corso broke the line, and in a second all the carriages had disappeared. Franz and Albert were opposite the Via delle Maratte; the coachman, without saying a word, drove up it, passed along the Place d'Espagne and the Rospoli Palace and stopped at the door of the hotel. Maitre Pastrini came to the door to receive his

guests. Franz's first care was to inquire after the count, and to express his regret that he had not returned in sufficient time to take him ; but Pastrini reassured him by saying, that the count of Monte-Cristo had ordered a second carriage for himself, and that it had gone at four o'clock to fetch him from the Rospoli Palace. The count had, moreover, charged him to offer the two friends the key of his box at the Argentina. Franz questioned Albert as to his intentions ; but Albert had great projects to put into execution before going to the theatre ; and instead of making any answer, he inquired if Maître Pastrini could procure him a tailor. "A tailor !" said the host ; "and for what?"—"To make us between now and to-morrow two costumes of Roman peasants," returned Albert. The host shook his head. "To make you two costumes between now and to-morrow? I ask your excellencies' pardon, but this is a demand quite French ; for the next week you will not find a single tailor who would consent to sew six buttons on a waistcoat if you paid him a crown a piece for each button."—"Then I must give up the idea?"

"No ; we have them ready-made. Leave all to me ; and to-morrow, when you wake, you shall find a collection of costumes with which you will be satisfied."—"My dear Albert," said Franz, "leave all to our host ; he has already proved himself full of resources ; let us dine quietly, and afterwards go and see '*l'Italienne à Alger*'"

"Agreed," returned Albert ; "but recollect, Maître Pastrini, that both my friend and myself attach the greatest importance to having to-morrow the costumes we have asked for." The host again assured them they might rely on him, and that their wishes should be attended to ; upon which Franz and Albert mounted to their apartments, and proceeded to disencumber themselves of their costume. Albert, as he took off his dress, carefully preserved the bunch of violets ; it was his sign of recognition for the morrow. The two friends sat down to table ; but they

"Well," said she, hardly giving Franz time to sit down, "it seems you have nothing better to do than to make the acquaintance of this new Lord Ruthven, and you are the best friends in the world."

"Without being so far advanced as that, Madame la Comtesse," returned Franz, "I cannot deny we have abused his good nature all day."

"All day?"—"Yes; this morning we breakfasted with him; we rode in his carriage all day, and now we have taken possession of his box."

"You know him, then?"—"Yes, and no."

"How so?"—"It is a long story."

"Relate it to me."—"It would frighten you too much."

"Another reason?"—"At least wait until the story has a conclusion."

"Very well; I prefer complete histories; but tell me how you made his acquaintance? Did any one introduce you to him?"

"No; it was he who introduced himself to us."—"When?"

"Last night, after we left you."—"Through what medium?"

"The very prosaic one of our landlord."

"He is staying, then, at the Hôtel des Londres with you?"

"Not only in the same hôtel, but on the same floor."

"What is his name: for, of course, you know?"

"The count of Monte-Cristo."—"That is not a family name?"

"No, it is the name of the isle he has purchased."

"And he is a count?"—"A Tuscan count."

"Well, we must put up with that," said the countess, who was herself of one of the oldest families of Venice. "What sort of a man is he?"

"Ask the Vicomte de Morcerf."

"You hear, M. de Morcerf, I am referred to you," said the countess.

"We should be very hard to please, madam," returned Albert, "did we not think him delightful: a friend of ten years' standing could not have done more for us, or with a more perfect courtesy."

"Come," observed the countess, smiling, "I see my vampire is only some millionaire, who has taken the appearance of Lara in order to avoid being confounded with M. de Rothschild; and you have seen her?"

"Her?"—"The beautiful Greek of yesterday."

"No; we heard, I think, the sound of her *guzla*, but she remained perfectly invisible."—"When you say invisible," interrupted Albert, "it is only to keep up the mystery; for whom do you take the blue domino at the window with the white curtains?"

"Where was this window with white hangings?" said the countess.

"At the Rospoli Palace."

"The count had three windows at the Rospoli Palace?"

"Yes. Did you pass through the Rue de Cours?"—"Yes."

"Well, did you remark two windows hung with yellow damask, and one with white damask with a red cross? Those were the count's windows?"

"Why, he must be a nabob! Do you know what those three windows were worth?"—"Two or three hundred Roman crowns?"

"Two or three thousand!"—"The devil!"

"Does his isle produce him such a revenue?"

"It does not bring him a bajocco."—"Then why did he purchase it?"

"For a whim."—"He is an original, then?"

"In reality," observed Albert, "he seemed to me somewhat eccentric; were he at Paris, and a frequenter of the theatres, I should say he was a poor devil literally mad. This morning he made two or three exits worthy of Didier or Anthony." At this moment a fresh visitor entered, and, according to custom, Franz gave up his seat to him. This circumstance

had, moreover, the effect of changing the conversation ; an hour afterwards the two friends returned to their hôtel. Maître Pastrini had already set about procuring their disguises for the morrow ; and he assured them they would be perfectly satisfied. The next morning, at nine o'clock, he entered Franz's room, followed by a tailor, who had eight or ten costumes of Roman peasants on his arm ; they selected two exactly alike, and charged the tailor to sew on each of their hats about twenty yards of riband, and to procure them two of those long silken sashes of different colours with which the lower orders decorate themselves on fête-days. Albert was impatient to see how he looked in his new dress : it was a jacket and breeches of blue velvet, silk stockings with clocks, shoes with buckles, and a silk waistcoat. This picturesque attire set him off to great advantage ; and when he had bound the scarf around his waist, and when his hat, placed coquettishly on one side, let fall on his shoulder a stream of ribands, Franz was forced to confess that costume has much to do with the physical superiority we accord to certain nations. The Turks, who used to be so picturesque with their long and flowing robes, are they not now hideous with their blue frocks buttoned up to the chin, and their red caps, which make them look like a bottle of wine with a red seal ? Franz complimented Albert, who looked at himself in the glass with an unequivocal smile of satisfaction. They were thus engaged when the count of Monte-Cristo entered.

"Gentlemen," said he, "although a companion is agreeable, perfect freedom is sometimes still more agreeable. I come to say that to-day, and the remainder of the Carnival, I leave the carriage entirely at your disposal. The host will tell you I have three or four more, so that you do not deprive me in any way of it. Employ it, I pray you, for your pleasure or your business."

The young men wished to decline, but they could find no good reason

possessed them both, whilst he had changed his costume they had assumed his.

Albert placed the fresh bouquet in his button-hole, but he kept the faded one in his hand; and when he again met the calèche, he raised it to his lips, an action which seemed greatly to amuse not only the fair lady who had thrown it, but her joyous companions also. The day was as gay as the preceding one, perhaps even more animated and noisy; the count appeared for an instant at his window, but when they again passed he had disappeared. It is almost needless to say that the flirtation between Albert and the fair peasant continued all day. In the evening, on his return, Franz found a letter from the embassy, to inform him he would have the honour of being received by his holiness the next day. At each previous visit he had made to Rome, he had solicited and obtained the same favour; and incited as much by a religious feeling as by gratitude, he was unwilling to quit the capital of the Christian world without laying his respectful homage at the feet of one of St. Peter's successors who has set the rare example of all virtues. He did not then think of the Carnival, for in spite of his condescension and touching kindness, one cannot incline one's self without awe before the venerable and noble old man called Gregory XVI. On his return from the Vatican, Franz carefully avoided the Rue de Cours; he brought away with him a treasure of pious thoughts, to which the mad gaiety of the *mascherata* would have been profanation. At ten minutes past five Albert entered overjoyed. The *paillassine* had reassumed her peasant's costume, and as she passed she raised her mask. She was charming. Franz congratulated Albert, who received his congratulations with the air of a man conscious they are merited. He had recognised, by certain unmistakable signs, that his fair *incognita* belonged to the aristocracy. He had made up his mind to write to her the next day. Franz remarked, whilst he gave these details, that Albert seemed to have something to ask of him, but that he was unwilling to ask it. He insisted upon it, declaring beforehand that he was willing to make any sacrifice he required. Albert let himself be pressed just as long as friendship required, and then avowed to Franz that he would do him a great favour by suffering him to occupy the carriage alone the next day. Albert attributed to Franz's absence the extreme kindness of the fair peasant in raising her mask. Franz was not sufficiently egotistical to stop Albert in the middle of an adventure that promised to prove so agreeable to his curiosity and so flattering to his vanity. He felt assured that the perfect indiscretion of his friend would duly inform him of all that happened; and as, during three years that he had travelled all over Italy, a similar piece of good fortune had never fallen to his share, Franz was by no means sorry to learn how to act on such an occasion. He therefore promised Albert that he would content himself the morrow with witnessing the Carnival from the windows of the Rospoli Palace.

The next morning he saw Albert pass and repass. He held an enormous bouquet, which he doubtless meant to make the bearer of his amorous epistle. This belief was changed into certainty when Franz saw the bouquet (remarkable by a circle of white camellias) in the hand of a charming *paillassine* dressed in rose-coloured satin. The evening was no longer joy, but delirium. Albert nothing doubted but that the fair unknown would reply in the same manner. Franz anticipated his wishes by telling him the noise fatigued him, and that he should pass the next day in writing and looking over his journal. Albert was not deceived, for the next evening Franz saw him enter shaking triumphantly a folded paper he held by

one corner. "Well," said he, "was I mistaken?"—"She has answered you!" cried Franz.

"Read!" This word was pronounced in a manner impossible to describe. Franz took the letter, and read:

"Tuesday evening, at seven o'clock, descend from your carriage opposite the Via dei Pontefici, and follow the Roman peasant who snatches your *moccoletto* from you. When you arrive at the first step of the church of San Giacomo, be sure to fasten a knot of rose-coloured ribands to the shoulder of your costume of *paillasse*, in order that you may be recognised. Until then you will not see me.—CONSTANCY AND DISCRETION."

"Well," asked he, when Franz had finished, "what do you think of that?"

"I think that the adventure is assuming a very agreeable appearance."

"I think so, also," replied Albert; "and I very much fear you will go alone to the duke of Bracciano's ball." Franz and Albert had received that morning an invitation from the celebrated Roman banker. "Take care, Albert," said Franz. "All the nobility of Rome will be present; and if your fair *incognita* belong to the higher class of society, she must go there."

"Whether she goes there or not, my opinion is still the same," returned Albert. "You have read the letter?"—"Yes."

"You know how imperfectly the women of the *mezzo ceto* are educated in Italy?" (This is the name of the lower class.)—"Yes."

"Well; read the letter again. Look at the writing, and find a fault in the language or orthography." (The writing was, in reality, charming, and the orthography irreproachable.) "You are born to good fortune," said Franz, as he returned the letter.

"Laugh as much as you will," replied Albert, "I am in love."—"You alarm me," cried Franz. "I see that I shall not only go alone to the duke

was going to the Palli Theatre, the box at the Argentina Theatre would be lost if they did not profit by it. This assurance determined the two friends to accept it.

Franz had become by degrees accustomed to the count's paleness, which had so forcibly struck him the first time he saw him. He could not refrain from admiring the severe beauty of his features, the only defect, or rather the principal quality of which was the pallor. Veritable hero of Byron! Franz could not (we will not say see him, but) even think of him without representing his stern head on the shoulders of Manfred, or beneath the casque of Lara. His forehead was marked by the line that indicates the constant presence of a bitter thought; he had those fiery eyes that seem to penetrate to the heart; and the haughty and disdainful upper lip that gives to the words it utters a peculiar character that impresses them on the minds of those to whom they are addressed. The count was no longer young. He was at least forty; and yet it was easy to understand he was formed to rule the young men with whom he associated at present. In reality, to complete his resemblance with the fantastic heroes of the English poet, the count seemed to have the power of fascination. Albert was constantly expatiating on their good fortune in meeting such a man. Franz was less enthusiastic; but the count exercised over him also the ascendancy a strong mind always acquires. He thought several times of the project the count had of visiting Paris; and he had no doubt but that, with his eccentric character, his characteristic face, and his colossal fortune, he would produce a great effect there. And yet he did not wish to be at Paris when the count was there. The evening passed as evenings mostly pass at Italian theatres; that is, not in listening to the music, but in paying visits and conversing. The Countess G— wished to revive the subject of the count, but Franz announced he had something far newer to tell her; and, in spite of Albert's demonstrations of false modesty, he informed the countess of the great event which had pre-occupied them for the last three days. As similar intrigues are not uncommon in Italy, if we may credit travellers, the countess did not manifest the least incredulity, but congratulated Albert on his success. They promised, upon separating, to meet at the duke of Bracciano's ball, to which all Rome was invited. The heroine of the bouquet kept her word; she gave Albert no sign of her existence the morrow and day after.

At length arrived the Tuesday, the last and most tumultuous day of the Carnival. The Tuesday, the theatres open at ten o'clock in the morning, as Lent begins after eight at night. The Tuesday, all those who through want of money, time or enthusiasm, have not been to see the Carnival before, mingle in the gaiety, and contribute to the noise and excitement. From two o'clock till five Franz and Albert followed in the fête, exchanging handfuls of confetti with the other carriages and the pedestrians, who crowded amongst the horses' feet and the carriage wheels without a single accident, a single dispute, or a single fight. The fêtes are veritable days of pleasure to the Italians. The author of this history, who has resided five or six years in Italy, does not recollect to have ever seen a ceremony interrupted by one of those events so common in other countries. Albert was triumphant in his costume of *paillasse*. A knot of rose-coloured ribands fell from his shoulder almost to the ground. In order that there might be no confusion, Franz wore his peasant's costume.

As the day advanced, the tumult became greater. There was not on the pavement, in the carriages, at the windows, a single tongue that was silent, a single arm that did not move. It was a human storm, composed of a

thunder of cries, and a hail of sweetmeats, flowers, eggs, oranges, and nosegays. At three o'clock the sound of fireworks, let off on the Place del Popolo and the Place de Vénise (heard with difficulty amid the din and confusion) announced that the races were about to begin. The races, like the *moccoli*, are one of the episodes peculiar to the last days of the Carnival. At the sound of the fireworks the carriages instantly broke the ranks, and retired by the adjacent streets. All these evolutions are executed with an inconceivable address and marvellous rapidity, without the police interfering in the matter. The pedestrians ranged themselves against the walls; then the trampling of horses and the clashing of steel were heard. A detachment of carabineers, fifteen abreast, galloped up the Rue de Cours in order to clear it for the *barberi*. When the detachment arrived at the Place de Vénise, a second volley of fireworks was discharged, to announce that the street was clear. Almost instantly, in the midst of a tremendous and general outcry, seven or eight horses, excited by the shouts of three hundred thousand spectators, passed by like lightning. Then the Castle of Saint Angelo fired three cannons to indicate that number three had won. Immediately, without any other signal, the carriages moved on, flowing on towards the Corso, down all the streets, like torrents pent up for a while, which again flow into the parent river; and the immense stream again continued its course between its two banks of granite.

A new source of noise and movement was added to the crowd. The sellers of *moccoletti* entered on the scene. The *moccoli*, or *moccoletti*, are candles which vary in size from the pascal taper to the rushlight, and which cause the actors on the great scene which terminates the Carnival two different sources of thought:—1st. How to preserve their *moccoletto* alight. 2nd. How to extinguish the *moccoletti* of others. The *moccoletto* is like life: man has found but one means of transmitting it, and that one comes from God. But he has discovered a thousand means of taking it

course towards the church of San Giacomo. The steps were crowded with masks, who strove to snatch each other's flambeau. Franz followed Albert with his eyes, and saw him mount the first step. Instantly a mask, wearing the well-known costume of a female peasant, snatched his *moccoletto* from him without his offering any resistance. Franz was too far off to hear what they said, but, without doubt, nothing hostile passed, for he saw Albert disappear arm-in-arm with the peasant girl. He watched them pass through the crowd some time, but at length he lost sight of them in the Via Macello. Suddenly the bell that gives the signal for the end of the Carnival sounded, and at the same instant all the *moccoletti* were extinguished as if by enchantment. It seemed as though one immense blast of the wind had extinguished every one. Franz found himself in utter darkness. No sound was audible save that of the carriages that conveyed the masks home ; nothing was visible save a few lights that burnt behind the windows. The Carnival was finished.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CATACOMBS OF SAINT SEBASTIAN.

IN his whole life, perhaps, Franz had never before experienced so sudden an impression, so rapid a transition from gaiety to sadness, as in this moment. It seemed as though Rome, under the magic breath of some demon of the night, had suddenly changed into a vast tomb. By a chance, which added yet more to the intensity of the darkness, the moon, which was on the wane, did not rise until eleven o'clock, and the streets which the young man traversed were plunged in the deepest obscurity. The distance was short ; and at the end of ten minutes his carriage, or rather the count's, stopped before the Hôtel de Londres. Dinner was waiting ; but as Albert had told him that he should not return so soon, Franz sat down without him. Maître Pastrini, who had been accustomed to see them dine together, inquired into the cause of his absence, but Franz merely replied that Albert had received on the previous evening an invitation which he had accepted. The sudden extinction of the *moccoletti*, the darkness which had replaced the light, and the silence which had succeeded the turmoil, had left in Franz's mind a certain depression which was not free from uneasiness. He therefore dined very silently, in spite of the officious attention of his host, who presented himself two or three times to inquire if he wanted anything.

Franz resolved to wait for Albert as late as possible. He ordered the carriage, therefore, for eleven o'clock, desiring Maître Pastrini to inform him the moment Albert returned to the hôtel. At eleven o'clock Albert had not come back. Franz dressed himself, and went out, telling his host that he was going to pass the night at the duke of Bracciano's. The house of the duke of Bracciano is one of the most delightful in Rome ; his lady, one of the last heiresses of the Colonnas, does its honours with the most consummate grace, and thus their *fêtes* have a European celebrity. Franz and Albert had brought to Rome letters of introduction to them ; and the first question on Franz's arrival was to ask him where was his travelling companion. Franz replied that he had left him at the moment they were about to extinguish the *mocoli*, and that he had lost sight of him in the Via Macello. "Then he has not returned ?" said the duke.—"I waited for him until this hour," replied Franz.

"And do you know whither he went ?"—"No, not precisely ; however, I think it was something very like an assignation."

"Diavolo !" said the duke, "this is a bad day, or rather a bad night, to be out late ; is it not, countess ?" These words were addressed to the Countess G——, who had just arrived, and was leaning on the arm of M. Torlonia, the duke's brother.—"I think, on the contrary, that it is a charming night," replied the countess, "and those who are here will not complain but of one thing, that of its too rapid flight."

"I am not speaking," said the duke, with a smile, "of the persons who are here : the men run no other danger than that of falling in love with you, and the women of falling ill of jealousy at seeing you so lovely ; I allude to persons who were out in the streets of Rome."—"Ah !" asked the countess, "who is out in the streets of Rome at this hour, unless it be to go to a ball ?"

"Our friend, Albert de Morcerf, countess, whom I left in pursuit of his unknown about seven o'clock this evening," said Franz, "and whom I have not seen since."

"And don't you know where he is ?"—"Not at all."

"Is he armed ?"—"He is *en paille*."

"You should not have allowed him to go," said the duke to Franz : "you, who know Rome better than he does."—"You might as well have tried to stop number three of the *barberi*, who gained the prize in the race to-day," replied Franz ; "and then, moreover, what could happen to him ?"

"Who can tell ? The night is gloomy, and the Tiber is very near the Via Macello." Franz felt a shudder run through his veins at observing the feeling of the duke and the countess so much in unison with his own personal disquietude. "I informed them at the hôtel that I had the honour of passing the night here, duke," said Franz, "and desired them to come and inform me of his return."—"Ah !" replied the duke, "here, I think, is one of my servants who is seeking you."

individual first addressed him. "What wants your excellency of me?" inquired the man, retreating a step or two, as if to keep on his guard.

"Are not you the person who brought me a letter," inquired Franz "from the Viscount de Morcerf?"

"Your excellency lodges at Pastrini's hotel?"—"I do."

"Your excellency is the travelling companion of the viscount?"

"I am."—"Your excellency's name—"

"Is the Baron Franz d'Epinaï?"

"Then it is to your excellency that this letter is addressed."

"Is there any answer?" inquired Franz, taking the letter from him.

"Yes—your friend at least hopes so."—"Come upstairs with me, and I will give it to you."—"I prefer waiting here," said the messenger, with a smile.

"And why?"

"Your excellency will know when you have read the letter."

"Shall I find you, then, here?"—"Certainly."

Franz entered the hotel. On the staircase he met Maître Pastrini.

"Well?" said the landlord.—"Well—what?" responded Franz.

"You have seen the man who desired to speak with you from your friend?" he asked of Franz.—"Yes, I have seen him," he replied, "and he has handed this letter to me. Light the candle in my apartment, if you please." The innkeeper gave orders to a servant to go before Franz with a bougie. The young man had found Maître Pastrini looking very much alarmed, and this had only made him the more anxious to read Albert's letter; and thus he went instantly towards the waxlight, and unfolded the letter. It was written and signed by Albert. Franz read it twice before he could comprehend what it contained. It was thus conceived:—

"MY DEAR FELLOW,—The moment you have received this, have the kindness to take from my pocket-book, which you will find in the square drawer of the secrétaire, the letter of credit; add your own to it, if it be not sufficient. Run to Torlonia, draw from him instantly four thousand piastres, and give them to the bearer. It is urgent that I should have this money without delay. I do not say more, relying on you as you may rely on me.

"Your friend,

"ALBERT DE MORCERF.

"P.S.—I now believe in Italian banditti."

Below these lines were written, in a strange hand, the following in Italian:—

"Se alle sei della mattina le quattro mila piastre non sono nelle mie mani, alle sette il Conte Alberto avrà cessato di vivere.

"LUIGI VAMPA."

"If by six in the morning the four thousand piastres are not in my hands, by seven o'clock the Viscount Albert de Morcerf will have ceased to live."

This second signature explained all to Franz, who now understood the objection of the messenger to coming up into the apartment; the street was safer for him. Albert, then, had fallen into the hands of the famous chief of banditti in whose existence he had for so long a time refused to believe. There was no time to lose. He hastened to open the secrétaire,

and found the pocket-book in the drawer, and in it the letter of credit. There were in all six thousand piastres, but of these six thousand Albert had already expended three thousand. As to Franz, he had no letter of credit, as he lived at Florence, and had only come to Rome to pass seven or eight days ; he had brought but a hundred louis, and of these he had not more than fifty left. Thus seven or eight hundred piastres were wanting to them both to make up the sum that Albert required. True, he might in such a case rely on the kindness of M. Torlonia. He was, therefore, about to return to the Palazzo Bracciano without loss of time, when suddenly a luminous idea crossed his mind. He remembered the count of Monte-Cristo. Franz was about to ring for Maître Pastrini, when that worthy presented himself. "My dear sir," he said, hastily, "do you know if the count is within?"

"Yes, your excellency ; he has this moment returned."

"Is he in bed?"—"I should say no."

"Then ring at his door, if you please, and request him to be so kind as to give me an audience." Maître Pastrini did as he was desired, and returning five minutes after, he said,—"The count awaits your excellency." Franz went along the corridor, and a servant introduced him to the count. He was in a small cabinet which Franz had not yet seen, and which was surrounded with divans. The count came towards him. "Well, what good wind blows you hither at this hour?" said he ; "have you come to sup with me ? It would be very kind of you."

"No ; I have come to speak to you of a very serious matter."

"A serious matter !" said the count, looking at Franz with the earnestness usual to him ; "and what may it be?"

"Are we alone?"—"Yes," replied the count, going to the door, and returning. Franz gave him Albert's letter. "Read that," he said. The count read it.

"Have you not saved Peppino's life?"

"Ah! ah!" said the count, "who told you that?"

"No matter, I know it." The count knit his brows, and remained silent an instant. "And if I went to seek Vampa, would you accompany me?"

"If my society would not be disagreeable."—"Be it so. It is a lovely night, and a walk without Rome will do us both good."

"Shall I take any arms?"—"For what purpose?"

"Any money?"

"It is useless. Where is the man who brought the letter?"

"In the street."

"He awaits the answer?"—"Yes."

"I must learn where we are going. I will summon him hither."

"It is useless: he would not come up."—"To your apartments perhaps; but he will not make any difficulty in entering mine." The count went to the window of the apartment that looked on to the street, and whistled in a peculiar manner. The man in the mantle quitted the wall, and advanced into the centre of the street. "*Salite!*" said the count, in the same tone in which he would have given an order to his servant. The messenger obeyed without the least hesitation, but rather with alacrity, and, mounting the steps of the passage at a bound, entered the hotel; five seconds afterwards he was at the door of the cabinet. "Ah, it is you, Peppino," said the count. But Peppino, instead of answering, threw himself on his knees, seized the count's hand, and covered it with kisses. "Ah," said the count, "you have, then, not forgotten that I saved your life; that is strange, for it is a week ago!"—"No, excellency; and never shall I forget it," returned Peppino, with an accent of profound gratitude.

"Never! That is a long time; but it is something that you believe so. Rise and answer." Peppino glanced anxiously at Franz. "Oh, you may speak before his excellency," said he; "he is one of my friends. You allow me to give you this title?" continued the count in French; "it is necessary to excite this man's confidence."

"You can speak before me," said Franz; "I am a friend of the count's."

"Good!" returned Peppino. "I am ready to answer any questions your excellency may address to me."

"How did the Viscount Albert fall into Luigi's hands?"

"Excellency, the Frenchman's carriage passed several times the one in which was Teresa."—"The chief's mistress?"

"Yes. The Frenchman threw her a bouquet; Teresa returned it; all this with the consent of the chief, who was in the carriage."

"What!" cried Franz, "was Luigi Vampa in the carriage with the Roman peasants?"—"It was he who drove, disguised as the coachman," replied Peppino.—"Well?" said the count.

"Well, then, the Frenchman took off his mask; Teresa, with the chief's consent, did the same. The Frenchman asked for a rendezvous; Teresa gave him one—only, instead of Teresa, it was Beppo who was on the steps of the Church of San Giacomo."—"What!" exclaimed Franz, "the peasant girl who snatched his moccoletto from him?"

"Was a lad of fifteen," replied Peppino. "But it was no disgrace to your friend to have been deceived; Beppo has taken in plenty of others."—"And Beppo led him outside the walls?" said the count.

"Exactly so; a carriage was waiting at the end of Via Macello. Beppo got in, inviting the Frenchman to follow him, and he did not wait to be

asked twice. He gallantly offered the right-hand seat to Beppo, and sat by him. Beppo told him he was going to take him to a villa a league from Rome ; the Frenchman assured him he would follow him to the end of the world. The coachman went up the Rue di Ripetta and the Porte San Paolo ; and when they were two hundred yards outside, as the Frenchman became somewhat too forward, Beppo put a brace of pistols to his head, the coachman pulled up, and did the same. At the same time, four of the band, who were concealed on the banks of the Almo, surrounded the carriage. The Frenchman made some resistance, and nearly strangled Beppo ; but he could not resist five armed men, and was forced to yield. They made him get out, walk along the banks of the river, and then brought him to Teresa and Luigi, who were waiting for him in the catacombs of St. Sebastian."

"Well," said the count, turning towards Franz, "it seems to me that this is a very likely story. What do you say to it?"—"Why, that I should think it very amusing," replied Franz, "if it had happened to any one but poor Albert."

"And, in truth, if you had not found me here," said the count, "it might have proved a gallant adventure which would have cost your friend dear ; but now, be assured, his alarm will be the only serious consequence."

—"And shall we go and find him?" inquired Franz.

"Oh, decidedly, sir. He is in a very picturesque place—do you know the catacombs of St. Sebastian?"

"I was never in them, but I have often resolved to visit them."

"Well, here is an opportunity made to your hand, and it would be difficult to contrive a better. Have you a carriage?"—"No."

"That is of no consequence ; I always have one ready, day and night."

"Always ready?"

"Yes. I am a very capricious being, and I should tell you that some

of the ruin, and suddenly retreat into the darkness on a signal from Peppino. A short time before they reached the circus of Caracalla the carriage stopped, Peppino opened the door, and the count and Franz alighted.

"In ten minutes," said the count to his companion, "we shall arrive there."

He then took Peppino aside, gave him some order in a low voice, and Peppino went away, taking with him a torch, brought with them in the carriage. Five minutes elapsed, during which Franz saw the shepherd advance along a narrow path in the midst of the irregular ground which forms the convulsed soil of the plain of Rome, and disappear in the midst of the high red herbage, which seemed like the bristling mane of some enormous lion. "Now," said the count, "let us follow him." Franz and the count in their turn then advanced along the same path, which, at the end of a hundred paces, led them by a declivity to the bottom of a small valley. They then perceived two men conversing in the shade. "Ought we to advance?" asked Franz of the count; "or should we pause?"—"Let us go on; Peppino will have warned the sentry of our coming." One of these two men was Peppino, and the other a bandit on the lookout. Franz and the count advanced, and the bandit saluted them. "Your excellency," said Peppino, addressing the count, "if you will follow me, the opening of the catacombs is close at hand."—"Go on, then," replied the count. They came to an opening behind a clump of bushes, and in the midst of a pile of rocks by which a man could scarcely pass. Peppino glided first into this crevice; but after advancing a few paces the passage widened. Then he paused, lighted his torch, and turned round to see if they came after him. The count first reached a kind of square space, and Franz followed him closely. The earth sloped in a gentle descent, enlarging as they proceeded; still Franz and the count were compelled to advance stooping, and scarcely able to proceed two abreast. They went on a hundred and fifty paces thus, and then were stopped by "Who goes there?" At the same time they saw the reflection of a torch on the barrel of a carbine.

"A friend!" responded Peppino; and, advancing alone towards the sentry, he said a few words to him in a low tone; and then he, like the first, saluted the nocturnal visitors, making a sign that they might proceed.

Behind the sentinel was a staircase with twenty steps. Franz and the count descended these, and found themselves in a kind of cross-roads, forming a burial-ground. Five roads diverged like the rays of a star, and the walls, dug into niches, placed one above the other in the shape of coffins, showed that they were at last in the catacombs. In one of the cavities, whose extent it was impossible to determine, some rays of light were visible. The count laid his hand on Franz's shoulder. "Would you like to see a camp of bandits in repose?" he inquired.—"Exceedingly," replied Franz.

"Come with me, then. Peppino, extinguish the torch." Peppino obeyed, and Franz and the count were suddenly in utter darkness, only fifty paces in advance of them there played along the wall some reddish beams of light, more visible since Peppino had put out his torch. They advanced silently, the count guiding Franz as if he had the singular faculty of seeing in the dark. Franz himself, however, distinguished his way more plainly in proportion as he advanced towards the rays of light, which served them for guides: three arcades, of which the middle served as the door, offered themselves. These arcades opened on one side to the corridor, in which



were the count and Franz, and on the other to a large square chamber, entirely surrounded by niches similar to those of which we have spoken. In the midst of this chamber were four stones, which had formerly served as an altar, as was evident from the cross which still surmounted them. A lamp, placed at the base of a pillar, lighted up with its pale and flickering flame the singular scene which presented itself to the eyes of the two visitors concealed in the shadow. A man was seated with his elbow leaning on the column, and was reading with his back turned to the arcades, through the openings of which the new-comers contemplated him. This was the chief of the band, Luigi Vampa. Around him, and in groups, according to their fancy, lying in their mantles, or with their backs against a kind of stone bench, which went all round the Columbarium, were to be seen twenty brigands or more, each having his carbine within reach. At the bottom, silent, scarcely visible, and like a shadow, was a sentinel, who was walking up and down before a kind of opening, which was only distinguishable because in that spot the darkness seemed thicker. When the count thought Franz had gazed sufficiently on this picturesque tableau, he raised his finger to his lips, to warn him to be silent, and, ascending the three steps which led to the corridor of the Columbarium, entered the chamber by the centre arcade, and advanced towards Vampa, who was so intent on the book before him that he did not hear the noise of his footsteps.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel, less occupied, and who saw by the lamp's light a shadow which approached his chief. At this sound, Vampa rose quickly, drawing at the same moment a pistol from his girdle. In a moment all the bandits were on their feet, and twenty carbines were levelled at the count. "Well," said he, in a voice perfectly calm, and no muscle of his countenance disturbed, "well, my dear Vampa, it appears to me that you receive a friend with a great deal of ceremony!"—"Ground





would blow his brains out with my own hand!"—"Well," said the count, turning towards Franz, "I told you there was some mistake in this."

"Are you not alone?" asked Vampa, with uneasiness.

"I am with the person to whom this letter was addressed, and to whom I desired to prove that Luigi Vampa was a man of his word.—Come, your excellency, here is Luigi Vampa, who will himself express to you his deep regret at the mistake he has committed."—Franz approached, the chief advancing several steps to meet him. "Welcome amongst us, your excellency," he said to him; "you heard what the count just said, and also my reply; let me add that I would not for the four thousand piastres at which I had fixed your friend's ransom, that this had happened."—"But," said Franz, looking round him uneasily, "where is the viscount?"—"I do not see him."

"Nothing has happened to him, I hope?" said the count, frowningly.

"The prisoner is there," replied Vampa, pointing to the hollow space in front of which the bandit was on guard, "and I will go myself and tell him he is free." The chief went towards the place he had pointed out as Albert's prison, and Franz and the count followed him. "What is the prisoner doing?" inquired Vampa of the sentinel.

"*Ma foi!* captain," replied the sentry, "I do not know, for the last hour I have not heard him stir."—"Come in, your excellency," said Vampa. The count and Franz ascended seven or eight steps after the chief, who drew back a bolt, and opened a door. Then, by the gleam of a lamp, similar to that which lighted the Columbarium, Albert was to be seen wrapped up in a cloak which one of the bandits had lent him, lying in a corner in profound slumber. "Come!" said the count, smiling with his own peculiar smile, "not so bad for a man who is to be shot at seven o'clock to-morrow morning!" Vampa looked at Albert with a kind of admiration; he was insensible to such a proof of courage.

"You are right, M. le Comte," he said; "this must be one of your rands." Then, going to Albert, he touched him on the shoulder, saying—"Will your excellency please to awaken?" Albert stretched out his arms, closed his eyelids, and opened his eyes. "Ah! ah!" said he, "is it you, again? You should have allowed me to have slept. I had such a dreadful dream: I was dancing the galop at Torlonia's with the Countess—." Then he drew from his pocket his watch, which he had pressed, that he might see how time sped.

"Half-past one only," said he. "Why the devil do you rouse me at this hour?"—"To tell you that you are free, your excellency."

"My dear fellow," replied Albert, with perfect ease of mind, "remember, in the future, Napoleon's maxim, 'Never awaken me but for bad news'; I had let me sleep on, I should have finished my galop, and have been grateful to you all my life. So, then, they have paid my ransom?"—"Your excellency?"—"Well, then, how am I free?"

"The person to whom I can refuse nothing, has come to demand you."—"Where is he hither?"—"Yes, hither."

"Well! then that person is a most amiable person." Albert looked round and perceived Franz. "What!" said he, "is it you, my dear friend? whose devotion and friendship are thus displayed?"—"No, not I, Franz," but our neighbour, the count of Monte-Cristo."

"Ah! M. le Comte," said Albert gaily, and arranging his cravat bands, "you are really most kind, and I hope you will consider me eternally obliged, in the first place for the carriage, and in the second place for the money!" and he put out his hand to the count, who shuddered as he

gave his own, but who nevertheless did give it. The bandit gazed on this scene with amazement ; he was evidently accustomed to see his prisoners tremble before him, and yet here was one whose gay temperament was not for a moment altered ; as for Franz, he was enchanted at the way in which Albert had sustained the national honour in the presence of the bandit. " My dear Albert," he said, " if you will make haste, we shall yet have time to finish the night at Torlonia's. You may conclude your interrupted gallop, so that you will owe no ill-will to Signor Luigi, who has, indeed, throughout this whole affair acted like a gentleman."—" You are decidedly right, and we may reach the Palazzo by two o'clock. Signor Luigi," continued Albert, " is there any formality to fulfil before I take leave of your excellency?"

" None, sir," replied the bandit, " you are as free as air."

" Well, then, a happy and merry life to you. Come, gentlemen, come."

And Albert, followed by Franz and the count, descended the staircase, crossed the square chamber, where stood all the bandits, hat in hand. " Peppino," said the brigand chief, " give me the torch."

" What are you going to do then?" inquired the count.

" I will show you the way back myself," said the captain ; " that is the least honour I can testify to your excellency." And taking the lighted torch from the hands of the herdsman, he preceded his guests, not as a servant, who performs an act of civility, but like a king who precedes ambassadors. On reaching the door, he bowed. " And now, M. le Comte," added he, " allow me to repeat my apologies, and I hope you will not entertain any resentment at what has occurred."

" No, my dear Vampa," replied the count ; " besides, you compensate for your mistakes in so gentlemanly a way, that one almost feels obliged to you for having committed them."

" Gentlemen," added the chief, turning towards the young men, " per-

and disappeared with her in the whirl of dancers. In the meanwhile Franz was considering the singular shudder that had pervaded the count of Monte-Cristo's frame at the moment when he had been, in some sort, forced to give his hand to Albert.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

ALBERT'S first words to his friend, on the following morning, contained a request that he would accompany him to visit the count; true, he had warmly and energetically thanked him the previous evening; but services such as he had rendered could never be too often acknowledged. Franz, who seemed attracted by some invisible influence towards the count, in which terror was strangely mingled, felt an extreme reluctance to permit his friend to be exposed alone to the singular fascination the mysterious count seemed to exercise over him, and therefore made no objection to Albert's request, but at once accompanied him to the desired spot, and, after a short delay, the count joined them in the saloon. "M. le Comte," said Albert, advancing to meet him, "permit me to repeat the poor thanks I offered last night, and to assure you that the remembrance of all I owe to you will never be effaced from my memory; believe me, while I have life, I shall never cease to dwell with grateful recollection on the prompt and important service you rendered me; as also to remember that to you I am indebted even for my life."—"My very good friend and excellent neighbour," replied the count, with a smile, "you really exaggerate my trifling exertions. You owe me nothing but some trifle of 20,000 francs, which you have been saved out of your travelling expenses, so that there is not much of a score between us;—but you must really permit me to congratulate you on the ease and unconcern with which you resigned yourself to your fate, and the perfect indifference you manifested as to the turn events might take."

"Upon my word," said Albert, "I deserve no credit for what I could not help, namely, a determination to take everything as I found it; and to let those bandits see, that although men get into troublesome scrapes all over the world, there is no nation but the French can smile even in the face of grim Death himself. All that, however, has nothing to do with my obligations to you, and I now come to ask you whether, in my own person, my family, or connections, I can in any way serve you? My father, the Comte de Morcerf, although of Spanish origin, possesses considerable influence, both at the court of France and Madrid, and I unhesitatingly place the best services of myself, and all to whom my life is dear, at your disposal."—"M. de Morcerf," replied the count, "your offer, far from surprising me, is precisely what I expected from you, and I accept it in the same spirit of hearty sincerity with which it is made;—nay, I will go still further, and say that I had previously made up my mind to ask a great favour at your hands."—"Oh, pray name it."

"I am wholly a stranger to Paris—it is a city I have never yet seen."

"Is it possible," exclaimed Albert, "that you have reached your present age without visiting the finest capital in the world? I can scarcely credit it."

"Nevertheless, it is quite true; still, I agree with you in thinking that my present ignorance of the first city in Europe is a reproach to me in every way, and calls for immediate correction; but, in all probability, I should have performed so important, so necessary a duty, as that of making

myself acquainted with the wonders and beauties of your justly celebrated capital, had I known any person who would have introduced me into the fashionable world, but unfortunately I possessed no acquaintance there, and, of necessity, was compelled to abandon the idea."

"So distinguished an individual as yourself," cried Albert, "could scarcely have required an introduction."—"You are most kind; but as regards myself, I can find no merit I possess, save that, as a millionaire, I might have become a partner in the speculations of M. Aguado and M. Rothschild; but as my motive in travelling to your capital would not have been for the pleasure of dabbling in the funds, I stayed away till some favourable chance should present itself of carrying my wish into execution: your offer, however, smooths all difficulties, and I have only to ask you, my dear M. de Morcerf" (these words were accompanied by a most peculiar smile), "whether you undertake, upon my arrival in France, to open to me the doors of that fashionable world of which I know no more than a Huron or native of Cochin-China?"

"Oh, that I do, and with infinite pleasure!" answered Albert; "and so much the more readily, as a letter received this morning from my father summons me to Paris, in consequence of a treaty of marriage (my dear Franz, do not smile, I beg of you) with a family of high standing, and connected with the very *Elite* of Parisian society."

"Connected by marriage, you mean," said Franz, laughingly.

"Well, never mind how it is," answered Albert, "it comes to the same thing in the end. Perhaps by the time you return to Paris, I shall be quite a sober, staid father of a family! A most edifying representative I shall make of all the domestic virtues—don't you think so? But as regards your wish to visit our fine city, my dear count, I can only say that you may command me and mine to any extent you please."—"Then it is a settled affair," said the count; "and I give you my solemn assurance

inquired the count ; "only let me warn you that I am proverbial for my punctilious exactitude in keeping my engagements."

"The very thing !" exclaimed Albert ; "yes, by all means, let us have this rendezvous duly drawn up and attested."—"So be it, then," replied the count, and extending his hand towards an almanac, suspended near the chimney-piece, he said, "To-day is the 21st of February ;" and drawing out his watch, added, "it is exactly half-past ten o'clock. Now promise me to remember this, and expect me the 21st of May at the same hour in the forenoon."

"Capital!" exclaimed Albert : "and you shall find everything and everybody ready to receive you. I take upon myself to promise that your breakfast shall be smoking hot awaiting your arrival."

"Where do you live?"—"No. 27, Rue du Helder."

"Have you bachelor's apartments there? I hope my coming will not put you to any inconvenience."—"I reside in my father's hotel, but occupy a pavilion at the farther side of the court-yard, entirely separated from the main building."

"Quite sufficient," replied the count, as, taking out his tablets, he wrote down "No. 27, Rue du Helder, 21st May, half-past ten in the morning." "Now then," said the count, returning his tablets to his pocket, "make yourself perfectly easy ; the hand of your timepiece will not be more accurate in marking the time than myself."—"Shall I see you again ere my departure?" asked Albert.

"That will be according to circumstances ; but when do you set off?"

"To-morrow evening, at five o'clock."—"In that case I must say adieu to you ; as I am compelled to go to Naples, and shall not return hither before Saturday evening or Sunday morning. And you, M. le Baron," pursued the count, addressing Franz, "do you also depart to-morrow?"—"Yes, I go also."

"And whither do you wend your way?—to Paris?"

"No, to Venice ; I shall remain in Italy for another year or two."

"Then we shall not meet in Paris?"

"I fear I shall not have that honour."—"Well, since we must part," said the count, holding out a hand to each of the young men, "allow me to wish you both a safe and pleasant journey." It was the first time the hand of Franz had come in contact with that of the mysterious individual before him, and unconsciously he shuddered at its touch, for it felt cold and icy as that of a corpse. "Let us understand each other," said Albert ; "it is agreed—is it not?—that you are to be in the Rue du Helder on the 21st of May, at half-past ten in the morning, and your word of honour passed for your punctuality?"

"All that is settled and arranged upon honour," replied the count ; "rely upon seeing me at the time and place agreed on." The young men then rose, and, courteously bowing to their singular acquaintance, quitted the room. "What is the matter?" asked Albert of Franz, when they had returned to their own apartments ; "you seem more than commonly thoughtful."—"I will confess to you, Albert," replied Franz, "that I am deeply puzzled to unravel the real career of this strange count ; and the appointment you have made to meet him in Paris fills me with a thousand apprehensions."

"My dear fellow," exclaimed Albert, "what can there possibly be in that to excite uneasiness? Why, you must have lost your senses to imagine either harm or danger can spring from it!"—"Whether I am in my senses or not," answered Franz, "such is my view of the evil effects that

may arise from a second meeting with this incomprehensible count, that I would give much you had not crossed his path."

"Listen to me, Franz," said Albert: "I am not sorry that our present conversation gives me an opportunity of remarking to you how much I have been struck with the difference of *your* manner towards the count to that with which you treat your friends in general; to him you are frigid and polite, while to myself, for instance, you are warm and cordial, as a friend should be. Have you any private reasons for so acting?"

"Possibly."

"Did you ever meet him previously to coming hither?"—"I have."

"And where?"—"Will you promise me not to repeat a single word of what I am about to tell you?"

"I promise you to observe the utmost secrecy."

"And you pledge me your honour that nothing shall induce you to divulge it?"

"I pledge my honour."—"Then listen to me." Franz then related to his friend the history of his excursion to the isle of Monte-Cristo, and of his finding a party of smugglers there, with whom were two Corsican bandits. He dwelt with considerable force and energy on the almost magical hospitality he had received from the count, and the magnificence of his entertainment in the grotto of *the Thousand and One Nights*. He recounted, with circumstantial exactitude, all particulars of the supper: the hatchis, the statues, the dream, and reality, and how, at his awakening, there remained no proof or trace of all these events, save the small yacht, seen in the distant horizon hastening with spread sails towards Porto-Vecchio. Then he detailed the conversation overheard by him at the Colosseum, between the mysterious visitant Vampa, in which the count had promised to obtain the release of the bandit Peppino,—an engagement which, as our readers are aware, he most faithfully fulfilled. At last

"Why, really the thing seems to me simple enough. Nobody knows better than yourself that the bandits of Corsica are not rogues or thieves, but purely and simply fugitives, driven by some sinister motive from their native town or village, and that their fellowship involves no disgrace or stigma; for my own part, I protest that, should I ever visit Corsica, my first visit, ere even I presented myself to the mayor or *préfet*, should be to the bandits of Colomba, if I could only manage to find them; for, on my conscience, they are a race of men I admire greatly."—"Still," persisted Franz, "I suppose you will allow that such men as Vampa and his band are regular villains, who have no other motive than plunder when they seize your person. How do you explain the influence the count evidently possessed over those ruffians?"

"My good friend, as in all probability I owe my present safety to that influence, it would ill become me to search too closely into its source; therefore, instead of condemning him for his intimacy with outlaws, you must give me leave to excuse any little irregularity there may be in such a connection; not altogether for preserving my life, for my own idea was that it never was in much danger; but certainly for saving me 4,000 piastres, which, being translated, means neither more nor less than 24,000 livres of our money—a sum at which, most assuredly, I should never have been estimated in France; proving most indisputably," added Albert, with a laugh, "that no prophet is honoured in his own country."—"Talking of countries," replied Franz, "can you tell me what country produced this mysterious person, what is his native tongue, his means of existence, and from whence does he derive his immense fortune, and what were those events of his early life—a life as marvellous as unknown—that have tintured his succeeding years with so dark and gloomy a misanthropy? Certainly these are questions that, in your place, I should like to have answered."

"My dear Franz," replied Albert, "when, upon receipt of my letter, you found the necessity of asking the count's assistance, you promptly went to him, saying, 'My friend Albert de Morcerf is in danger; help me to deliver him.' Was not that nearly what you said?"

"It was."—"Well, then, did he ask you, 'Who is M. Albert de Morcerf? how does he come by his name—his fortune? what are his means of existence? what is his birth-place? of what country is he a native?' Tell me, did he put all these questions to you?"

"I confess he asked me none."—"No; he merely came and freed me from the hands of Signor Vampa, where, I can assure you, spite of all my outward appearance of ease and unconcern, I did not very particularly care to remain. Now, then, Franz, when, in return for services so promptly and unhesitatingly rendered, he but asks me in return to do for him what is done daily for any Russian prince or Italian noble who may pass through Paris—merely to introduce him into society—would you have me refuse? My good fellow, you must have lost your senses to think it possible I could act with such cold-blooded policy." And this time it must be confessed that, in direct opposition to the ordinary discussions between the young men, all the good and powerful arguments were on Albert's side.—"Well," said Franz, with a sigh, "do as you please, my dear viscount, for your arguments are beyond my powers of refutation. Still, in spite of all, you must admit that this count of Monte-Cristo is a most singular personage."—"He is a philanthropist," answered the other; "and no doubt his motive in visiting Paris is to compete for the *Monthon* prize, given, as you are aware, to whoever shall be proved to

have most materially advanced the interests of virtue and humanity. If my vote and interest can obtain it for him, I will readily give him the one and promise the other. And now, my dear Franz, let us talk of something else. Come, shall we take our luncheon, and then pay a last visit to St. Peter's?" Franz silently assented; and the following afternoon, at half-past five o'clock, the young men parted, Albert de Morcerf to return to Paris, and Franz d'Épinay to pass a fortnight at Venice. But, ere he entered his travelling carriage, Albert, in the fear of his expected guest forgetting the engagement he had entered into, placed in the care of the waiter of the hotel a card to be delivered to the count of Monte-Cristo, on which, beneath the name of Albert de Morcerf, he had written in pencil—"27, Rue du Helder, on the 21st May, half-past ten A.M."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE GUESTS.

IN the house in the Rue du Helder, where Albert had invited the count of Monte-Cristo, everything was being prepared on the morning of the 21st of May to fulfil the engagement. Albert de Morcerf inhabited a pavilion situated at the corner of a large court, and directly opposite another building, in which were the servants' apartments. Two windows only of the pavilion faced the street; three other windows looked into the court, and two at the back into the garden. Between the court and the garden, built in the heavy style of the imperial architecture, was the large and fashionable dwelling of the Count and Countess de Morcerf. A high wall surrounded the whole of the hotel, surmounted at intervals by vases filled with flowers, and broken in the centre by a large gate of gilt iron, which served

of the curious could penetrate. On the first floor were the same rooms, with the addition of a third, formed out of the ante-chamber: these three rooms were a salon, a boudoir, and a bedroom. The salon downstairs was only an Algerian divan, for the use of smokers. The boudoir upstairs communicated with the bedchamber by an invisible door on the staircase; it was evident every precaution had been taken. Above this floor was a large *atelier*, which had been increased in size by pulling down the partitions: a pandemonium, in which the artist and the dandy strove for pre-eminence. There were collected and piled up all Albert's successive caprices, hunting-horns, bass-voils, flutes—a whole orchestra, for Albert had had not a taste but a fancy for music; easels, palettes, brushes, pencils—for music had been succeeded by painting; foils, boxing-gloves, broadswords, and single-sticks—for, following the example of the fashionable young men of the time, Albert de Morcerf cultivated, with far more perseverance than music and drawing, the three arts that complete a dandy's education, *i.e.*, fencing, boxing, and single-stick; and it was in this apartment that he received Grisier, Cook, and Charles Lecour. The rest of the furniture of this privileged apartment consisted of old cabinets of the time of Francis I., filled with China and Japan vases, earthenware from Lucca or Robbia, plates of Bernard de Palissy; of old arm-chairs, in which had perhaps reposed themselves Henry IV. or Sully, Louis XIII. or Richelieu—for two of these arm-chairs, adorned with a carved shield, on which were engraved the fleur-de-lis of France on an azure field, evidently came from the Louvre, or, at least, some royal residence. On these dark and sombre chairs were thrown splendid stuffs, dyed beneath Persia's sun, or woven by the fingers of the women of Calcutta or of Chandernagor. What these stuffs did there, it was impossible to say; they awaited, whilst gratifying the eyes, a destination unknown to their owner himself; in the meantime they filled the room with their golden and silky reflections. In the centre of the room was a piano in rosewood, of Roller and Blanchet, of small dimensions, but containing an orchestra in its narrow and sonorous cavity, and groaning beneath the weight of the chefs-d'œuvre of Beethoven, Weber, Mozart, Haydn, Grétry, and Porpora. On the walls, over the doors, on the ceiling, were swords, daggers, Malay cresces, maces, battle-axes, suits of armour, gilded, damasked, and inlaid, dried plants, minerals, and stuffed birds, opening their flame-coloured wings as if for flight, and their beaks that never close. This was the favourite sitting-room of Albert.

However, the morning of the appointment, the young man had established himself in the small salon downstairs. There, on a table, surrounded at some distance by a large and luxurious divan, every species of tobacco known, from the yellow tobacco of Petersburg to the black tobacco of Sinai, the Maryland, the Porto-Rico, and the Latakiah, was exposed in those pots of crackled earthenware of which the Dutch are so fond; beside them, in boxes of fragrant wood, were ranged, according to their size and quality, puceros, regalias, havannas, and manillas; and, in an open cabinet, a collection of German pipes, of chibouques, with their amber mouth-pieces ornamented with coral, and of narguellahs, with their long tubes of morocco, awaited the caprice or the sympathy of the smokers. Albert had himself presided at the arrangement, or, rather, the symmetrical derangement which, after coffee, the guests at a breakfast of modern days love to contemplate through the vapour that escapes from their mouth, and ascends in long and fanciful wreaths to the ceiling. At a quarter to ten, a valet entered; he composed, with a little groom named

John, and who only spoke English, all Albert's establishment, although the cook of the hotel was always at his service, and on great occasions the count's *chasseur* also. This valet, whose name was Germain, and who enjoyed the entire confidence of his young master, held in one hand a number of papers, and in the other a packet of letters, which he gave to Albert. Albert glanced carelessly at the different missives, selected two written in a small and delicate hand, and inclosed in scented envelopes, opened them, and perused their contents with some attention. "How did these letters come?" said he.

"One by the post, Madame Danglars' footman left the other."—"Let Madame Danglars know that I accept the place she offers me in her box. Wait; then, during the day, tell Rosa that when I leave the Opera I will sup with her, as she wishes. Take her six bottles of different wine—Cyprus, sherry, and Malaga, and a barrel of Ostend oysters; get them at Borel's, and be sure you say they are for me."

"At what o'clock, sir, do you breakfast?"

"What time is it now?"—"A quarter to ten."

"Very well, at half-past ten. Debray will, perhaps, be obliged to go to the minister—and besides" (Albert looked at his tablets), "it is the hour I told the count, 21st May, at half-past ten; and though I do not much rely upon his promise, I wish to be punctual. Is Madame la Comtesse up yet?"—"If M. le Vicomte wishes, I will inquire."

"Yes; ask her for one of her liqueur cellarets, mine is incomplete; and tell her I shall have the honour of seeing her about three o'clock, and that I request permission to introduce some one to her." The valet left the room. Albert threw himself on the divan, tore off the cover of two or three of the papers, looked at the playbills, made a face at perceiving they played an opera, and not a ballet; hunted vainly amongst the advertise-

button-hole."—"Yes, they sent me the order of Charles III.," returned Debray, carelessly.

"Come, do not affect indifference, but confess you were pleased to have it."—"Oh, it is very well as a finish to the toilette. It looks very neat on a black coat buttoned up."

"And makes you resemble the Prince of Wales or the Duke de Reichstadt."—"It is for that reason you see me so early."

"Because you have the order of Charles III., and you wish to announce the good news to me?"—"No, because I passed the night writing letters,—five-and-twenty despatches. I returned home at daybreak, and strove to sleep; but my head ached, and I got up to have a ride for an hour. At the Bois de Boulogne, *ennui* and hunger attacked me at once, —two enemies who rarely accompany each other, and who are yet leagued against me, a sort of Carlo-republican alliance. I then recollected you gave a breakfast this morning, and here I am. I am hungry, feed me; I am bored, amuse me."

"It is my duty as your host," returned Albert, ringing the bell, whilst Lucien turned over, with his gold-mounted cane, the papers that lay on the table. "Germain, a glass of sherry and a biscuit. In the meantime, my dear Lucien, here are cigars—contraband, of course—try them, and persuade the minister to sell us such instead of poisoning us with cabbage-leaves."—"Peste! I will do nothing of the kind; the moment they come from government you would find them execrable.—Besides, that does not concern the home but the financial department. Address yourself to M. Humann, section of the indirect contributions, Corridor A., No. 26."

"On my word," said Albert, "you astonish me by the extent of your acquaintance. Take a cigar."—"Really, my dear count," replied Lucien, lighting a manilla at a rose-coloured taper that burnt in a stand beautifully enamelled—"how happy you are to have nothing to do: you do not know your own good fortune!"

"And what would you do, my dear diplomatist," replied Morcerf, with a slight degree of irony in his voice, "if you did nothing? What! private secretary to a minister, plunged at once into European cabals and Parisian intrigues; having kings, and, better still, queens, to protect, parties to unite, elections to direct; making more use of your cabinet with your pen and your telegraph than Napoleon did of his battle-fields with his sword and his victories; possessing five-and-twenty thousand francs a year, besides your place; a horse, for which Château Renaud offered you four hundred louis, and which you would not part with; a tailor who never disappoints you; with the opera, the jockey-club, and other varieties, can you not amuse yourself? Well, I will amuse you."—"How?"—"By introducing to you a new acquaintance."

"A man or a woman?"—"A man."

"I know so many already."—"But you do not know this man."

"Where does he come from—the end of the world?"

"Farther still, perhaps."

"The devil! I hope he does not bring our breakfast with him."

"Oh, no; our breakfast comes from my father's kitchen. Are you hungry?"

"Humiliating as such a confession is, I am. But I dined at M. de Villefort's, and lawyers always give you very bad dinners. You would think they felt some remorse; did you ever remark that?"

"Ah! depreciate other persons' dinners; you ministers give such splendid ones."—"Yes; but we do not invite people of fashion. If we were not forced to entertain a parcel of country boobies because they

think and vote with us, we should never dream of dining at home, I assure you."

"Well, take another glass of sherry and another biscuit."

"Willingly. Your Spanish wine is excellent. You see we were quite right to pacify that country."—"Yes ; but Don Carlos ?"

"Well, Don Carlos will drink Bordeaux, and in ten years we will marry his son to the little queen."

"You will then obtain the Golden Fleece, if you are still in the ministry."—"I think, Albert, you have adopted the system of feeding me on smoke this morning."

"Well, you must allow it is the best thing for the stomach : but I hear Beauchamp in the next room ; you can dispute together, and that will pass away the time."—"About what ?"—"About the papers."

"My dear friend," said Lucien, with an air of sovereign contempt, "do I ever read the papers ?"

"Then you will dispute the more."

"M. Beauchamp," announced the servant. "Enter, enter," said Albert, rising and advancing to meet the young man. "Here is Debray, who detests you without reading you, so he says."

"He is quite right," returned Beauchamp ; "for I criticise him without knowing what he does. Good-day, commander !"

"Ah ! you know that already," said the private secretary, smiling and shaking hands with him.

"*Pardieu !*"—"And what do they say of it in the world ?"

"In which world ? we have so many worlds in the year of grace 1838."

"In the entire political world, of which you are one of the leaders."

"They say that it is quite fair ; and that you sow so much red, that you must reap a little blue."—"Come, come ! that is not bad !" said Lucien.

"Why you do not join our party, my dear Beauchamp ? With your talents

his wife's this evening I shall hear the tragedy of a peer of France. The devil take the constitutional government ! and since we had our choice, as they say, at least, how could we choose that ?”

“ I understand ; you must lay in a stock of hilarity.”

“ Do not run down M. Danglars' speeches,” said Debray ; he votes for you, for he belongs to the opposition.”

“ *Pardieu !* that is exactly the worst of all : I am waiting until you send him to speak at the Luxembourg, to laugh at my ease.”

“ My dear friend,” said Albert to Beauchamp, “ it is plain the affairs of Spain are settled, for you are most desperately out of humour this morning. Recollect that Parisian gossip has spoken of a marriage between myself and Mlle. Eugénie Danglars ; I cannot in conscience, therefore, let you run down the speeches of a man who will one day say to me, ‘ M. le Vicomte, you know I give my daughter eighty thousand pounds.’ ”

“ Ah, this marriage will never take place,” said Beauchamp. “ The king has made him a baron, and can make him a peer, but he cannot make him a gentleman ; and the count de Morcerf is too aristocratic to consent, for the paltry sum of eighty thousand pounds, to a *mésalliance*. The viscount de Morcerf can only wed a marchioness.”

“ But eighty thousand pounds is a nice little sum,” replied Morcerf.

“ It is the social capital of a theatre on the boulevard, or a railroad from the Jardin des Plantes to la Râpée.”

“ Never mind what he says, Morcerf,” said Debray, “ do you marry her. You marry a ticket of a money-bag, it is true ; well, but what does that matter ? It is better to have a blazon less and a figure more on it. You have seven martlets on your arms : give three to your wife, and you will still have four ; that is one more than M. de Guise had, who so nearly became king of France, and whose cousin was emperor of Germany.”

“ On my word, I think you are right, Lucien,” said Albert, absently.

“ To be sure ; besides, every millionaire is as noble as a bastard—that is, he can be.”—“ Do not say that, Debray,” returned Beauchamp, laughing, “ for here is Château-Renaud, who, to cure you of your mania for paradoxes, will pass the sword of Renaud de Montauban, his ancestor, through your body.”

“ He will sully it then,” returned Lucien ; “ for I am low—very low.”

“ Oh, heavens !” cried Beauchamp, “ the minister quotes Béranger ; what shall we come to next ?”—“ M. de Château-Renaud ! M. Maximilian Morrel !” said the servant, announcing two fresh guests.

“ Now, then, to breakfast,” said Beauchamp ; “ for, if I remember, you told me you only expected two persons, Albert.”

“ Morrel !” muttered Albert—“ Morrel ! who is he ?” But before he had finished, M. de Château-Renaud, a handsome young man of thirty, gentleman all over, that is, with the figure of a Guiche and the wit of a Montemart, took Albert's hand. “ My dear Albert,” said he, “ let me introduce to you M. Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis, my friend ; and what is more—however the man speaks for himself—my preserver. Salute my hero, viscount.” And he stepped on one side, exhibiting the large and open brow, the piercing eyes, and black moustache of the fine and noble young man whom our readers have already seen at Marseilles, under circumstances sufficiently dramatic not to be forgotten. A rich uniform, half French, half Oriental, set off his broad chest, decorated with the order of the Legion of Honour, and his graceful and stalwart figure. The young officer bowed with easy and elegant politeness. “ Monsieur,” said Albert, with affectionate courtesy, “ M. le comte de Château-Renaud knew how

much pleasure this introduction would give me ; you are his friend, be ours also."

"Well said !" interrupted Château-Renaud ; "and pray that, if you should ever be in a similar predicament, he may do as much for you as he did for me."—"What has he done ?" asked Albert.

"Oh ! nothing worth speaking of," said Morrel ; "M. de Château-Renaud exaggerates."—"Not worth speaking of ?" cried Château-Renaud ; "life is not worth speaking of !—that is rather too philosophical, on my word, Morrel. It is very well for you, who risk your life every day ; but for me, who only did so once——"

"What is evident in all this, baron, is, that M. le Capitaine Morrel saved your life."—"Exactly so."

"On what occasion ?" asked Beauchamp.

"Beauchamp, my good fellow, you know I am starving," said Debray : "do not set him off on some long story."—"Well, I do not prevent your sitting down to table," replied Beauchamp ; "Château-Renaud can tell us whilst we eat our breakfast."

"Gentlemen," said Morcerf, "it is only a quarter-past ten, and I expect some one else."—"Ah, true ! a diplomatist !" observed Debray.

"I know not whether he be or not ; I only know that I gave him a mission which he terminated so entirely to my satisfaction, that had I been king, I should have instantly created him knight of all my orders, even had I been able to offer him the Golden Fleece and the Garter."

"Well, since we are not to sit down to table," said Debray, "take a glass of sherry, and tell us all about it."

"You all know that I had the fancy of going to Africa."

"It is a road your ancestors have traced for you," said Albert, gallantly.

"Yes, but I doubt that your object was like theirs—to rescue the Holy Sepulchre."—"You are quite right, Beauchamp," observed the young

for no one knows what may happen), the other encircled my neck with the yataghan, when this gentleman whom you see here charged them, shot the one who held me by the hair with a pistol, and cleft the skull of the other with his sabre. He had assigned himself the task of saving the life of a man that day ; chance caused that man to be myself. When I am rich I will order a statue of Chance from Klugmann or Marochetti."

"Yes," said Morrel, smiling, "it was the 5th of September, the anniversary of the day on which my father was miraculously preserved ; therefore, as far as it lies in my power, I endeavour to celebrate it by some——"

"Heroic action," interrupted Château-Renaud. "I was chosen. But this is not all : after rescuing me from the sword, he rescued me from the cold, not by sharing his cloak with me, like St. Martin, but by giving it me all ; then from hunger by sharing with me—guess what ?"

"A Strasbourg pie ?" asked Beauchamp.

"No, his horse ; of which we each of us ate a slice with a hearty appetite. It was very hard."—"The horse ?" said Morcerf, laughing.

"No, the sacrifice," returned Château-Renaud ; "ask Debray if he would sacrifice his English steed for a stranger ?"—"Not for a stranger," said Debray, "but for a friend I might, perhaps."

"I divined that you would become mine, M. le Comte," replied Morrel ; "besides, as I had the honour to tell you, heroism or not, sacrifice or not, that day I owed an offering to bad fortune in recompense for the favours good fortune had on other days granted to us."

"The history to which M. Morrel alludes," continued Château-Renaud, "is an admirable one, which he will tell you some day when you are better acquainted with him ; to-day let us fill our stomachs, and not our memories. What time do you breakfast, Albert ?"

"At half-past ten."

"Precisely ?" asked Debray, taking out his watch.

"Oh ! you will give me five minutes' grace," replied Morcerf, "for I also expect a preserver."—"Of whom ?"

"Of myself," cried Morcerf ; "*parbleu !* do you think I cannot be saved as well as any one else, and that there are only Arabs who cut off heads ? Our breakfast is a philanthropic one, and we shall have at table—at least, I hope so—two benefactors of humanity."—"What shall we do ?" said Debray ; "we have only one Monthyon prize."

"Well, it will be given to some one who has done nothing to deserve it," said Beauchamp ; "that is the way the Academy mostly escapes from the dilemma."—"And where does he come from ?" asked Debray. "You have already answered the question once, but so vaguely, that I venture to put it a second time."

"Really," said Albert, "I do not know ; when I invited him three months ago, he was then at Rome, but since that time, who knows where he may have gone ?"

"And you think him capable of being exact ?" demanded Debray.

"I think him capable of everything."

"Well, with the five minutes' grace, we have only ten left."

"I will profit by them to tell you something about my guest."

"I beg pardon !" interrupted Beauchamp ; "are there any materials for an article in what you are going to tell us ?"

"Yes, and for a most curious one."—"Go on, then, for I see I shall not get to the Chamber this morning, and I must make up for it."

"I was at Rome the last Carnival."

"We know that," said Beauchamp.

"Yes, but what you do not know is that I was carried off by bandits."

"There are no bandits," cried Debray.

"Yes there are, and most hideous, or rather most admirable ones, for I found them ugly enough to frighten me."—"Come, my dear Albert," said Debray, "confess that your cook is behind-hand, that the oysters have not arrived from Ostend or Marennes, and that, like Madame de Maintenon, you are going to replace the dish by a story. Say so at once; we are sufficiently well-bred to excuse you, and to listen to your history, fabulous as it promises to be."

"And I say to you, fabulous as it may seem, I tell it as a true one from beginning to end. The brigands had carried me off, and conducted me to a most gloomy spot, called the Catacombs of Saint Sebastian."

"I know it," said Château-Renaud; "I narrowly escaped catching a fever there."

"And I did more than that," replied Morcerf, "for I caught one. I was informed I was a prisoner until I paid the sum of 4,000 Roman crowns—about 24,000 francs (£960). Unfortunately, I had not above 1,500. I was at the end of my journey and of my credit. I wrote to Franz—and were he here he would confirm every word—I wrote then to Franz that if he did not come with the four thousand crowns before six, at ten minutes past I should have gone to join the blessed saints and glorious martyrs, in whose company I had the honour of being; and Signor Luigi Vampa, such was the name of the chief of these bandits, would have scrupulously kept his word."

"But Franz did come with the four thousand crowns," said Château-Renaud. "A man whose name is Franz d'Epinau or Albert de Morcerf has not much difficulty in procuring them."—"No, he arrived accompanied simply by the guest I am going to present to you."

"What a question!"—"Well, do you know if the persons you see there are rich or poor, if their sacks of wheat are not rubies or diamonds? They seem like poor fishermen, and suddenly they open some mysterious cavern filled with the wealth of the Indies."

"Afterwards?"

"My count of Monte-Cristo is one of those fishermen. He has even a name taken from the book, since he calls himself Sinbad the Sailor, and has a cave filled with gold."

"And you have seen this cavern, Morcerf?" asked Beauchamp.

"No, but Franz has: for Heaven's sake, not a word of this before him. Franz went in with his eyes blindfolded, and was served by mutes and women to whom Cleopatra was nothing. Only he is not quite sure about the women, for they did not come in until after he had taken some hatchis, so that what he took for women might have been simply a row of statues."

The two young men looked at Morcerf as if to say,—

"Are you mad, or are you laughing at us?"—"And I also," said Morrel, thoughtfully, "have heard something like this from an old sailor named Penelon."

"Ah!" cried Albert, "it is very lucky that M. Morrel comes to aid me; you are vexed, are you not, that he thus gives a clue to the labyrinth?"

"My dear Albert," said Debray, "what you tell us is so extraordinary."

"Ah! because your ambassadors and your consuls do not tell you of them—they have no time. They must not molest their countrymen who travel."—"Now you get angry, and attack our poor agents. How will you have them protect you? The Chamber cuts down their salaries every day, so that now they have scarcely any. Will you be ambassador, Albert? I will send you to Constantinople."

"No, lest on the first demonstration I make in favour of Mehemet Ali, the Sultan send me the bowstring, and make my secretaries strangle me."

"There, now!" said Debray. "Yes, but this does not prevent the Count of Monte-Cristo from existing."

"*Pardieu!* every one exists."

"Doubtless, but not in the same way: every one has not black slaves, superb galleys, arms like those at La Casaba, Arabian horses, and Greek mistresses."—"Have you seen his Greek?"

"I have both seen and heard her. I saw her at the theatre, and heard her one morning when I breakfasted with the count."—"He eats, then?"

"Yes; but so little, it can hardly be called eating."

"He must be a vampire."—"Laugh, if you will; the Countess G——, who had known Lord Ruthven, declared the count was a vampire."

"Ah, capital!" said Beauchamp. "For a man not connected with newspapers, here is the pendant to the famous sea-serpent of the *Constitutionnel*."

"Wild eyes, the iris of which contracts or dilates at pleasure," said Debray; "facial angle strongly developed, magnificent forehead, livid complexion, black beard, sharp and white teeth, politeness unexceptionable."

"Just so, Lucien," returned Morcerf; "you have described him feature for feature. Yes, keen and cutting politeness. This man has often made me shudder! and one day that we were viewing an execution, I thought I should faint, more from hearing the cold and calm manner in which he spoke of every description of torture than from the sight of the executioner and the culprit."—"Did he not conduct you to the ruins of the Colosseum and suck your blood?" asked Beauchamp.

"Or, after having delivered you, make you sign a blood-coloured parch-

ment surrendering your soul to him?"—"Rail on, rail on at your ease, gentlemen," said Morcerf, somewhat piqued. "When I look at you Parisians, idlers on the Boulevard de Gand or the Bois de Boulogne, and think of this man, it seems to me we are not of the same race."

"I am highly flattered," returned Beauchamp. "At the same time," added Château-Renaud, "your Count of Monte-Cristo is a very fine fellow, always excepting his little arrangements with the Italian banditti."—"There are no Italian banditti!" said Debray.

"No vampire!" cried Beauchamp. "No count of Monte-Cristo!" added Debray. "There is half-past ten striking, Albert!"

"Confess you have dreamed this, and let us sit down to breakfast," continued Beauchamp. But the sound of the clock had not died away when Germain announced, "His Excellency the count of Monte-Cristo." The involuntary start every one gave proved how much Morcerf's narrative had impressed them, and Albert himself could not prevent himself from feeling a sudden emotion. He had not heard a carriage stop in the street, or steps in the ante-chamber; the door had itself opened noiselessly. The count appeared, dressed with the greatest simplicity; but the most fastidious dandy could have found nothing to cavil at in his toilette: every article of dress—hat, coat, gloves, and boots—were from the first makers. He seemed scarcely five-and-thirty. But what struck everybody was his extreme resemblance to the portrait Debray had drawn. The count advanced, smiling, into the centre of the room, and approached Albert, who hastened towards him, holding out his hand. "Punctuality," said Monte-Cristo, "is the politeness of kings, according to one of your sovereigns, I think; but it is not the same with travellers. However, I hope you will excuse the two or three seconds I am behindhand; five hundred leagues are not to be accomplished without some trouble, and especially in France, where, it seems, it is forbidden to beat the postilions."

Monte-Cristo that fixed gaze, that passing colour, and that slight trembling of the eyelid, that showed his emotion. "Ah! you have a noble heart," said the count; "so much the better." This exclamation, which corresponded to the count's own thought rather than to what Albert was saying, surprised everybody, and especially Morrel, who looked at Monte-Cristo with surprise. But, at the same time, the intonation was so soft that, however strange the exclamation might seem, it was impossible to be offended at it. "Why should he doubt it?" said Beauchamp to Château-Renaud.

"In reality," replied the latter, who, with his aristocratic glance and his knowledge of the world, had penetrated at once all that was penetrable in Monte-Cristo, "Albert has not deceived us, for the count is a most singular being. What say you, Morrel?"—"Ma foi! he has an open look about him that pleases me, in spite of the singular remark he has made about me."

"Gentlemen," said Albert, "Germain informs me breakfast is ready. My dear count, allow me to show you the way." They passed silently into the breakfast-room; every one took his place. "Gentlemen," said the count, seating himself, "permit me to make a confession which must form my excuse for any *inconvenances* I may commit. I am a stranger, and a stranger to such a degree, that this is the first time I have ever been at Paris. The French way of living is utterly unknown to me, and up to the present time I have followed the Eastern customs, which are entirely in contrast to the Parisian. I beg you, therefore, to excuse if you find anything in me too Turkish, too Italian, or too Arabian. Now, then, let us breakfast."

"With what an air he says all this!" muttered Beauchamp; "decidedly he is a great man."—"A great man in his country," added Debray.

"A great man in every country, M. Debray," said Château-Renaud. The count was, it may be remembered, a most temperate guest. Albert remarked this, expressing his fears lest, at the outset, the Parisian mode of life should displease the traveller in the most essential point. "My dear count," said he, "I fear one thing, and that is, that the fare of the Rue du Helder is not so much to your taste as that of the Place d'Espagne. I ought to have consulted you on the point, and have had some dishes prepared expressly."—"Did you know me better," returned the count, smiling, "you would not give one thought of such a thing for a traveller like myself, who has successively lived on macaroni at Naples, polenta at Milan, olla podrida at Valencia, pilau at Constantinople, karrick in India, and swallows' nests in China. I eat everywhere, and of everything, only I eat but little; and to-day, that you reproach me with my want of appetite, is my day of appetite, for I have not eaten since yesterday morning."

"What!" cried all the guests, "you have not eaten for four-and-twenty hours?"—"No," replied the count; "I was forced to go out of my road to obtain some information near Nîmes, so that I was somewhat late, and therefore I did not choose to stop."

"And you ate in your carriage?" asked Morcerf.—"No, I slept, as I generally do when I am weary without having the courage to amuse myself, or when I am hungry without feeling inclined to eat."

"But you can sleep when you please, monsieur?" said Morrel.

"Yes."—"You have a receipt for it?"—"An infallible one."

"That would be invaluable to us in Africa, who have not always any food to eat, and rarely anything to drink."—"Yes," said Monte-Cristo;

"but, unfortunately, a receipt excellent for a man like myself would be very dangerous applied to an army, which might not awake when it was needed."

"May we inquire what is this receipt?" asked Debray.—"Oh, yes," returned Monte-Cristo; "I make no secret of it. It is a mixture of excellent opium, which I fetched myself from Canton in order to have it pure, and the best hatchis which grows in the east—that is, between the Tigris and the Euphrates. These two ingredients are mixed in equal proportions, and formed into pills. Ten minutes after one is taken, the effect is produced. Ask M. le Baron Franz d'Epinay; I think he tasted them one day."

"Yes," replied Morcerf, "he said something about it to me."

"But," said Beauchamp, who, in his capacity of journalist, was very incredulous, "you always carry this drug about you?"—"Always."

"Would it be an indiscretion to ask to see those precious pills?" continued Beauchamp, hoping to take him at a disadvantage.—"No, monsieur," returned the count; and he drew from his pocket a marvellous *bonbonnière*, formed out of a single emerald, and closed by a golden lid, which unscrewed and gave passage to a small ball of a greenish colour, and about the size of a pea. This ball had an acrid and penetrating odour. There were four or five more in the emerald, which would contain about a dozen. The *bonbonnière* passed round the table, but it was more to examine the admirable emerald than to see the pills that it passed from hand to hand. "And is it your cook who prepares these pills?" asked Beauchamp.

"Oh, no, monsieur," replied Monte-Cristo; "I do not thus betray my enjoyments to the vulgar. I am a tolerable chemist, and prepare my pills myself."

"This is a magnificent emerald, and the largest I have ever seen," said

of the Jockey Club has been stopped and robbed on the Boulevard ; that four persons have been assassinated in the Rue St. Denis or the Faubourg St. Germain ; that ten, fifteen, or twenty thieves, have been arrested in a *café* on the Boulevard du Temple, or in the Thermes de Julien, and who yet contest the existence of the bandits of the Maremma, of the Campagna di Romana, or the Pontine Marshes. Tell them yourself that I was taken by bandits, and that without your generous intercession I should now have been sleeping in the catacombs of St. Sebastian, instead of receiving them in my humble abode in the Rue du Helder."

"Ah," said Monte-Cristo, "you promised me never to mention that circumstance."—"It was not I who made that promise," cried Morcerf ; "it must have been some one else whom you have rescued in the same manner, and whom you have forgotten. Pray speak of it, for I shall not only, I trust, relate the little I do know, but also a great deal I do not know."

"It seems to me," returned the count, smiling, "that you played a sufficiently important part to know as well as myself what happened."—"Well, you promise me, if I tell all I know, to relate, in your turn, all that I do not know?"—"That is but fair," replied Monte-Cristo.

"Well," said Morcerf, "for three days I believed myself the object of the attentions of a mask, whom I took for a descendant of Tullia or Poppœa, whilst I was simply the object of the attentions of a *contadine*, and I say *contadine* to avoid saying peasant. What I know is, that, like a fool, a greater fool than he of whom I spoke just now, I mistook for this peasant a young bandit of fifteen or sixteen, with a beardless chin and slim waist, and who, just as I was about to imprint a chaste salute on his lips, placed a pistol to my head, and, aided by seven or eight others, led, or rather dragged me, to the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, where I found a highly educated chief of brigands perusing Cæsar's 'Commentaries,' and who deigned to leave off reading to inform me, that unless the next morning, before six o'clock, four thousand piastres were paid in to his account at his banker's, at a quarter past six I should have ceased to exist. The letter is still to be seen, for it is in Franz d'Epinay's possession, signed by me, and with a postscript of M. Luigi Vampa. This is all I know, but I know not, M. le Comte, how you contrived to inspire with such respect the bandits of Rome, who have so little respect for anything ; I assure you, Franz and I were lost in admiration."

"Nothing more simple," returned the count. "I had known the famous Vampa for more than ten years. When he was quite a child, and only a shepherd, I gave him, for having shown me the way to a place, some pieces of gold ; he, in order to repay me, gave me a poniard, the hilt of which he had carved with his own hand, and which you may have seen in my collection of arms. In after years, whether he had forgotten this interchange of presents, which ought to have cemented our friendship, or whether he did not recollect me, he sought to take me, but, on the contrary, it was I who captured him and a dozen of his band. I might have handed him over to Roman justice, which is somewhat expeditious, and which would have been still more so with him ; but I did nothing of the sort—I suffered him and his band to depart."

"With the condition that they should sin no more," said Beauchamp, laughing. "I see they kept their promise."

"No, monsieur," returned Monte-Cristo, "upon the simple condition that they should respect myself and my friends. Perhaps what I am about to say may seem *strange* to you, who are socialists, and vaunt *humanity and your duty to your neighbour*, but I never seek to protect society who

does not protect me, and whom I will even say, in general, occupies itself about me only to injure me ; and thus giving them a low place in my esteem, and preserving a neutrality towards them, it is society and my neighbour who are indebted to me.”——“Bravo !” cried Château-Renaud ; “you are the first man I ever met sufficiently courageous to preach egotism. Bravo ! M. le Comte, bravo !”

“It is frank, at least,” said Morrel. “But I am sure that M. le Comte does not regret having once deviated from the principles he has so boldly avowed.”——“How have I deviated from those principles, monsieur ?” asked Monte-Cristo, who could not help looking at Morrel with so much intensity, that two or three times the young man had been unable to sustain the clear and piercing eye of the count.

“Why, it seems to me,” replied Morrel, “that in delivering M. de Morcerf, whom you did not know, you did good to your neighbour and to society.”——“Of which he is the brightest ornament,” said Beauchamp, drinking off a glass of champagne.

“Monsieur le Comte,” cried Morcerf, “you are at fault : you, one of the most formidable logicians I know—and you must see it clearly proved, that instead of being an egotist, you are a philanthropist. Ah ! you call yourself Oriental, a Levantine, Maltese, Indian, Chinese ; your family name is Monte-Cristo ; Sinbad the Sailor is your baptismal appellation, and yet the first day you set foot in Paris you instinctively possess the greatest virtue, or rather the chief defect, of us eccentric Parisians,—that is, you assume the vices you have not, and conceal the virtues you possess.”——“My dear vicomte,” returned Monte-Cristo, “I do not see, in all I have done, anything that merits, either from you or these gentlemen, the pretended eulogies I have received. You are no stranger to me, for I knew since I had given up two rooms to you—since I had invited you to breakfast with me—since I had lent you one of my carriages—since we

"you can present yourself everywhere, and be well received; I can be useful in one way only—if knowledge of Parisian habits, of the means of rendering yourself comfortable, or of the bazaars, can assist, you may dispose of me to find you a fitting dwelling here. I dare offer to share my apartments with you, as I shared yours at Rome—I, who do not possess egotism, but am yet egotistical *par excellence*; for, except myself, these rooms would not contain a shadow, unless it were the shadow of a female."—"Ah," said the count, "that is a most conjugal reservation; I recollect that at Rome you said something of a projected marriage. May I congratulate you?"

"The affair is still in projection."—"And he who says in 'projection,' means already decided," said Debray.

"No," replied Morcerf, "my father is most anxious about it; and I hope, ere long, to introduce you, if not to my wife, at least to my intended—Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars."—"Eugénie Danglars!" said Monte-Cristo; "tell me, is not her father M. le Baron Danglars?"

"Yes," returned Morcerf; "a baron of a new creation."—"What matter," said Monte-Cristo, "if he has rendered the State services which merit this distinction?"

"Enormous ones," answered Beauchamp. "Although in reality a liberal, he negotiated a loan of six millions (£240,000) for Charles X., in 1829, who made him a baron and chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur; so that he wears the riband, not, as you would think, in his waistcoat-pocket, but at his button-hole."—"Ah!" interrupted Morcerf, laughing, "Beauchamp, Beauchamp, keep that for the *Charivari*, but spare my future father-in-law before me." Then, turning to Monte-Cristo, "You just now pronounced his name as if you knew the baron?"

"I do not know him," returned Monte-Cristo; "but I shall probably soon make his acquaintance, for I have a credit opened with him by the house of Richard and Blount, of London, Arstein and Eskeles of Vienna, and Thomson and French at Rome." As he pronounced the two last names, the count glanced at Maximilian Morrel. If the stranger expected to produce an effect on Morrel, he was not mistaken—Maximilian started as if he had been electrified. "Thomson and French!" said he; "do you know this house, monsieur?"—"They are my bankers in the capital of the Christian world," returned the count quietly. "Can my influence with them be of any service to you?"—"Oh, M. le Comte, you could assist me perhaps in researches which have been, up to the present, fruitless. This house, in past years, did ours a great service, and has, I know not for what reason, always denied having rendered us this service."

"I shall be at your orders," said Monte-Cristo, inclining himself.

"But," continued Morcerf, "*à propos* of Danglars,—we have strangely wandered from the subject. We were speaking of a suitable habitation for the Count of Monte-Cristo. Come, gentlemen, let us all propose some place: where shall we lodge this new guest in our great capital?"

"Faubourg Saint-Germain," said Château-Renaud. "The count will find there a charming hotel, with a court and garden."

"Bah! Château-Renaud," returned Debray, "you only know your dull and gloomy Faubourg Saint-Germain; do not pay any attention to him, M. le Comte—live in the Chaussée d'Antin, that's the real centre of Paris."—"Bouvelard de l'Opéra," said Beauchamp; "on the first floor—a house with a balcony. M. le Comte will have his cushions of silver cloth brought there, and as he smokes his chibouque, see all Paris pass before him."

"You have no idea, then, Morrel?" asked Château-Renaud: "you do not propose anything."—"Oh, yes," returned the young man, smiling; "on the contrary, I have one; but I expected the count would be tempted by one of the brilliant proposals made him; yet as he has not replied to any of them, I will venture to offer him a suite of apartments in a charming hotel, in the Pompadour style, that my sister has inhabited for a year, in the Rue Meslay."

"You have a sister?" asked the count.—"Yes, monsieur, a most excellent sister."—"Married?"—"Nearly nine years."—"Happy?" asked the count again.

"As happy as it is permitted to a human creature to be," replied Maximilian. "She married the man she loved, who remained faithful to us in our fallen fortunes—Emmanuel Herbaut." Monte-Cristo smiled imperceptibly. "I live there during my leave of absence," continued Maximilian; "and I shall be, together with my brother-in-law Emmanuel, at the disposition of M. le Comte, whenever he thinks fit to honour us."—"One minute!" cried Albert, without giving Monte-Cristo the time to reply. "Take care, you are going to immure a traveller, Sinbad the Sailor, a man who comes to see Paris; you are going to make a patriarch of him."

"Oh, no," said Morrel; "my sister is five-and-twenty, my brother-in-law is thirty; they are gay, young, and happy; besides, M. le Comte will be in his own house, and only see them when he thinks fit to do so."—"Thanks, monsieur," said Monte-Cristo; "I shall content myself with being presented to your sister and her husband, if you will do me the honour to introduce me; but I cannot accept the offer of any one of these gentlemen, since my habitation is already prepared."

"What!" cried Morcerf; "you are, then, going to an hotel—that will be very dull for you."

"Was I so badly lodged at Rome?" said Monte-Cristo smiling.

"No," said Monte-Cristo; "I told you I did not wish to be behind my time; I dressed myself in the carriage, and descended at the vicomte's door." The young men looked at each other; they did not know if it was a comedy Monte-Cristo was playing; but every word he uttered had such an air of simplicity, that it was impossible to suppose what he said was false: besides, why should he tell a falsehood? "We must content ourselves, then," said Beauchamp, "with rendering M. le Comte all the little services in our power. I, in my quality of journalist, open all the theatres to him."—"Thanks, monsieur," returned Monte-Cristo, "my steward has orders to take a box at each theatre."

"Is your steward also a Nubian?" asked Debray.

"No, he is a countryman of yours, if a Corsican is a countryman of anyone's. But you know him, M. de Morcerf."

"Is it that excellent M. Bertuccio, who understands hiring windows so well?"—"Yes, you saw him the day I had the honour of receiving you; he has been a soldier, a smuggler—in fact, everything. I would not be quite sure that he has not been mixed up with the police for some trifle—a stab with a knife, for instance."

"And you have chosen this honest citizen for your steward," said Debray. "Of how much does he rob you every year?"

"On my word," replied the count, "not more than another. I am sure he answers my purpose, knows no impossibility, and so I keep him."

"Then," continued Château-Renaud, "since you have an establishment, a steward, and an hotel in the Champs Elysées, you only want a mistress." Albert smiled. He thought of the fair Greek he had seen in the count's box at the Argentina and Valle theatres. "I have something better than that," said Monte-Cristo; "I have a slave. You procure your mistresses from the Opera, the Vaudeville, or the Variétés; I purchased mine at Constantinople: it cost me more, but I have nothing to fear."—"But you forget," replied Debray, laughing, "that we are Franks by name and franks by nature, as King Charles said; and that the moment she put her foot in France your slave becomes free."

"Who will tell her?"—"The first person who sees her."

"She only speaks Romaic."—"That is different."

"But at least we shall see her," said Beauchamp, "or do you keep eunuchs as well as mutes?"—"Oh, no," replied Monte-Cristo; "I do not carry brutalism so far. Every one who surrounds me is free to quit me, and when they leave me will no longer have any need of me or any one else; it is for that reason, perhaps, that they do not quit me." They had long since passed to dessert and cigars.

"My dear Albert," said Debray, rising, "it is half-past two. Your guest is charming; but you leave the best company to go into the worst sometimes. I must return to the minister's. I will tell him of the count, and we shall soon know who he is."—"Take care," returned Albert; "no one has been able to accomplish that."

"Oh, we have three millions for our police; it is true they are almost always spent beforehand; but, no matter, we shall still have fifty thousand francs to spend for this purpose."

"And when you know, will you tell me?"

"I promise you. *Au revoir*, Albert. Gentlemen, good morning."

As he left the room, Debray called out loudly, "My carriage."

"Bravo!" said Beauchamp to Albert; "I shall not go to the chamber, but I have something better to offer my readers than a speech of M. Danglars."—"For heaven's sake, Beauchamp," returned Morcerf, "do

not deprive me of the merit of introducing him everywhere. Is he not peculiar?"

"He is more than that," replied Château-Renaud; "he is one of the most extraordinary men I ever saw in my life. Are you coming, Morrel?"—"Directly I have given my card to M. le Comte, who has promised to pay us a visit at Rue Meslay, No. 14."—"Be sure I shall not fail to do so," returned the count, bowing. And Maximilian Morrel left the room with the Baron de Château-Renaud, leaving Monte-Cristo alone with Morcerf.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE PRESENTATION.

WHEN Albert found himself alone with Monte-Cristo, "M. le Comte," said he, "allow me to commence my ciceroneship by showing you a specimen of a bachelor's apartment. You, who are accustomed to the palaces of Italy, can amuse yourself by calculating in how many square feet a young man who is not the worst lodged in Paris can live. As we pass from one room to another, I will open the windows to let you breathe." Monte-Cristo had already seen the breakfast-room and the salon on the ground-floor. Albert led him first to his *atelier*, which was, as we have said, his favourite apartment. Monte-Cristo was a worthy appreciator of all that Albert had collected here—old cabinets, Japan porcelain, Oriental stuffs, Venice glass, arms from all parts of the world—everything was familiar to him; and at the first glance he recognised their date, their country, and their origin. Morcerf had expected he should be the guide; on the contrary, it was he who, under the count's guidance, followed a course of archæology, mineralogy, and natural history. They descended to the

steps in the chamber, and stopped suddenly before it. It was the portrait of a young woman of five or six and twenty, with a dark complexion, and light and lustrous eyes, veiled beneath their long lashes. She wore the picturesque costume of the Catalan fisherwomen, a red and black bodice, and the golden pins in her hair. She was looking at the sea, and her shadow was defined on the blue ocean and sky. The light was so faint in the room that Albert did not perceive the paleness that spread itself over the count's visage, or the nervous heaving of his chest and shoulders. Silence prevailed for an instant, during which Monte-Cristo gazed intently on the picture.

"You have there a most charming mistress, viscount," said the count in a perfectly calm tone; "and this costume—a ball costume, doubtless—becomes her admirably."

"Ah, monsieur!" returned Albert, "I would never forgive you this mistake if you had seen another picture beside this. You do not know my mother; she it is whom you see here: she had her portrait painted thus six or eight years ago. This costume is a fancy one, it appears, and the resemblance is so great that I think I still see my mother the same as she was in 1830. The countess had this portrait painted during the count's absence. She doubtless intended giving him an agreeable surprise; but, strange to say, this portrait seemed to displease my father, and the value of the picture, which is, as you see, one of the best works of Leopold Robert, could not overcome his dislike to it. It is true, between ourselves, that M. de Morcerf is one of the most assiduous peers at the Luxembourg, a general renowned for theory, but a most mediocre amateur of art. It is different with my mother, who paints exceedingly well, and who, unwilling to part with so valuable a picture, gave it to me to put here, where it would be less likely to displease M. de Morcerf, whose portrait, by Gros, I will also show you. Excuse my talking of family matters; but as I shall have the honour of introducing you to the count, I tell you this to prevent your making any allusions to this picture. The picture seems to have a malign influence, for my mother rarely comes here without looking at it, and still more rarely does she look at it without weeping. This disagreement is the only one that has ever taken place between the count and countess, who are still as much united, although married more than twenty years, as the first day of their wedding."

Monte-Cristo glanced rapidly at Albert, as if to seek a hidden meaning in his words; but it was evident the young man uttered them in the simplicity of his heart. "Now," said Albert, "that you have seen all my treasures, allow me to offer them to you, unworthy as they are. Consider yourself as in your own house: and to put yourself still more at your ease, pray accompany me to the apartments of M. de Morcerf, to whom I wrote from Rome an account of the services you rendered me, and to whom I announced your promised visit, and I may say that both the count and countess anxiously desire to thank you in person. You are somewhat *blasé* I know, and family scenes have not much effect on Sinbad the Sailor, who has seen so many others. However, accept what I propose to you as an initiation into Parisian life—a life of politeness, visiting, and introductions." Monte-Cristo bowed without making any answer; he accepted the offer without enthusiasm and without regret, as one of those conventions of society which every gentleman looks upon as a duty. Albert summoned his servant, and ordered him to acquaint M. and Madame de Morcerf of the arrival of the count of Monte-Cristo. Albert followed him with the count. When they arrived at the antechamber, above the door

was visible a shield, which, by its rich ornaments and its harmony with the rest of the furniture, indicated the importance the owner attached to this blazon. Monte-Cristo stopped and examined it attentively.

"Azure seven meriets, or, placed bender," said he. "These are, doubtless, your family arms? Except the knowledge of blazons, that enables me to decipher them, I am very ignorant of heraldry—I, a count of a fresh creation, fabricated in Tuscany by the aid of a commandery of St. Stephen, and who would not have taken the trouble had I not been told that when you travel much it is necessary. Besides, you must have something on the panels of your carriage, to escape being searched by the custom-house officers. Excuse my putting such a question to you."—"It is not indiscreet," returned Morcerf, with the simplicity of conviction. "You have guessed rightly. These are our arms; that is, those of my father; but they are, as you see, joined to another shield, which has gules, a silver tower, which are my mother's. By her side I am Spanish, but the family of Morcerf is French, and, I have heard, one of the oldest of the south of France."

"Yes," replied Monte-Cristo, "these blazons prove that: almost all the armed pilgrims that went to the Holy Land took for their arms either a cross, in honour of their mission, or birds of passage, in sign of the long voyage they were about to undertake, and which they hoped to accomplish on the wings of faith. One of your ancestors had joined the Crusades; and supposing it to be only that of St. Louis, that makes you mount to the thirteenth century, which is tolerably ancient."—"It is possible," said Morcerf; "my father has in his study a genealogical tree which will tell you all that, and on which I made commentaries that would have greatly edified Hozier and Jaucourt. At present I no longer think of it; and yet I must tell you that we are beginning to occupy ourselves greatly with these things under our popular government."

of forty to forty-five years, but he seemed at least fifty, and his black moustache and eyebrows contrasted strangely with his almost white hair, which was cut short, in the military fashion. He was dressed in plain clothes, and wore at his button-hole the ribands of the different orders to which he belonged. This man entered with a tolerably dignified step, and with a species of haste. Monte-Cristo saw him advance towards him without making a single step. It seemed as if his feet were rooted to the ground, and his eyes on the count de Morcerf. "Father," said the young man, "I have the honour of presenting to you M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo, the generous friend whom I had the good fortune to meet in the critical juncture of which I have told you."—"You are most welcome, monsieur," said the count de Morcerf, saluting Monte-Cristo with a smile; "and monsieur has rendered our house, in preserving its only heir, a service which insures him our eternal gratitude." As he said these words, the count de Morcerf pointed to a chair, whilst he seated himself in another opposite the window.

Monte-Cristo, whilst he took the seat Morcerf offered him, placed himself in such a manner as to remain concealed in the shadow of the large velvet curtains, and read on the care-worn and livid features of the count a whole history of secret griefs written in each wrinkle time had planted there. "Madame la Vicomtesse," said Morcerf, "was at her toilette when she was informed of the visit she was about to receive. She would, however, be in the salon in ten minutes."—"It is a great honour for me," returned Monte-Cristo, "to be thus, on the first day of my arrival in Paris, brought in contact with a man whose merit equals his reputation, and to whom fortune has for once been equitable; but has she not still on the plains of Mitidja, or in the mountains of Atlas, a marshal's staff to offer you?"

"Oh," replied Morcerf, reddening slightly, "I have left the service, monsieur. Made a peer at the Restoration, I served through the first campaign under the orders of Marshal Bourmont. I could, therefore, expect a higher rank, and who knows what might have happened had the elder branch remained on the throne? But the Revolution of July was, it seems, sufficiently glorious to allow itself to be ungrateful; and it was so for all services that did not date from the imperial period. I tendered my resignation; for when you have gained your epaulets on the battle-field, you do not know how to manœuvre on the slippery ground of the salons. I have hung up my sword, and cast myself into politics. I have devoted myself to industry; I study the useful arts. During the twenty years I served, I often wished to do so, but I had not the time."—"These are the ideas that render your nation superior to any other," returned Monte-Cristo. "A gentleman of high birth, possessor of an ample fortune, you have consented to gain your promotion as an obscure soldier, step by step—this is uncommon; then become general, peer of France, commander of the Legion of Honour, you consent to again commence a second apprenticeship, without any other hope or any other desire than that of one day becoming useful to your fellow-creatures; this, indeed, is praiseworthy,—nay, more, it is sublime." Albert looked on and listened with astonishment; he was not used to see Monte-Cristo give vent to such bursts of enthusiasm. "Alas!" continued the stranger, doubtless to dispel the slight cloud that covered Morcerf's brow, "we do not act thus in Italy; we grow according to our race and our species, and we pursue the same lines, and often the same uselessness, all our lives."

"But, monsieur," said the count de Morcerf, "for a man of your merit,
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Italy is not a country, and France opens her arms to receive you ; respond to her call. France will not, perhaps, be always ungrateful ! She treats her children ill, but she always welcomes strangers."

" Ah, father !" said Albert, with a smile, " it is evident you do not know M. le comte de Monte-Cristo ; he despises all honours, and contents himself with those that are written on his passport."—" That is the most just remark," replied the stranger, " I ever heard made concerning myself !"

" You have been free to choose your career," observed the count de Morcerf, with a sigh ; " and you have chosen the path strewn with flowers."—" Precisely, monsieur," replied Monte-Cristo, with one of those smiles that a painter could never represent or a physiologist analyze.

" If I did not fear to fatigue you," said the general, evidently charmed with the count's manners, " I would have taken you to the Chamber ; there is a debate very curious to those who are strangers to our modern senators."

" I shall be most grateful, monsieur, if you will, at some future time, renew your offer ; but I have been flattered with the hope of being introduced to the countess, and I will therefore wait."—" Ah ! here is my mother," cried the viscount. Monte-Cristo turned round hastily, and saw Madame de Morcerf at the entrance of the salon, at the door opposite to that by which her husband had entered, pale and motionless ; when Monte-Cristo turned round, she let fall her arm, which for some unknown reason had been resting on the gilded door-post. She had been there some moments, and had overheard the last words of the visitor. The latter rose and bowed to the countess, who inclined herself without speaking. " Ah ! good heavens, madame !" said the count, " are you unwell, or is it the heat of the room that affects you ?"

" Are you ill, mother ?" cried the viscount, springing towards her.

She thanked them both with a smile. " No," returned she, " but I feel

"We shall have this pleasure another time!" said the countess; "you promise that?" Monte-Cristo inclined himself without answering; but the gesture might pass for assent. "I will not detain you, monsieur," continued the countess; "I would not have our gratitude become indiscreet or importunate."

"My dear count," said Albert, "I will endeavour to return your politeness at Rome, and place my coupé at your disposal until your own be ready."

"A thousand thanks for your kindness, viscount," returned the count of Monte-Cristo; "but I suppose that M. Bertuccio has suitably employed the four hours and a half I have given him, and that I shall find a carriage of some sort ready at the door." Albert was used to the count's manner of proceeding: he knew that, like Nero, he was in search of the impossible, and nothing astonished him; only wishing to judge with his own eyes how far the count's orders had been executed, he accompanied him to the door of the hotel. Monte-Cristo was not deceived. As soon as he appeared in the count de Morcerf's antechamber, a footman, the same who at Rome had brought the count's card to the two young men, and announced his visit, sprang into the vestibule, and when he arrived at the door the illustrious traveller found his carriage awaiting him. It was a coupé of Koller's building, and with horses and harness for which Drake had, to the knowledge of all the lions of Paris, refused on the previous day seven hundred guineas. "Monsieur," said the count to Albert, "I do not ask you to accompany me to my house, as I can only show you a habitation fitted up in a hurry, and I have, as you know, a reputation to keep up as regards not being taken by surprise. Give me, therefore, one more day before I invite you; I shall then be certain not to fail in my hospitality."

"If you ask me for a day, count, I know what to anticipate; it will not be a house I shall see, but a palace. You have decidedly some *génie* at your control."

"*Ma foi!* spread that idea," replied the count of Monte-Cristo, putting his foot on the velvet-lined steps of his splendid carriage, "and that will be worth something to me among the ladies." As he spoke, he sprang into the vehicle, the door was closed, but not so rapidly that Monte-Cristo perceived the almost imperceptible movement which stirred the curtains of the apartment in which he had left Madame de Morcerf. When Albert returned to his mother, he found her in the boudoir reclining in a large velvet arm-chair; the whole room so obscure that only the shining spangle, fastened here and there to the drapery, and the angles of the gilded frames of the pictures, gave a kind of light to the room. Albert could not see the countenance of the countess, which was lost in a thin veil she had put on her head, and which descended around her features like a cloud of vapour; but it seemed to him as though her voice had altered. He could distinguish amidst the perfumes of the roses and heliotropes in the flower-stands, the sharp and fragrant odour of volatile salts, and he remarked in one of the chased cups on the mantel-piece the countess's smelling-bottle, taken from its shagreen case, and exclaimed in a tone of uneasiness, as he entered,—*"My dear mother, have you been unwell during my absence?"*

"No, no, Albert! but you know these roses, tuberoses, and orange-flowers throw out at first, before one is used to them, such violent perfumes."

"Then, my dear mother," said Albert, putting his hand to the bell, "they must be taken into the antechamber. You are really unwell, and just now were so pale as you came into the room——"

"Was I pale, Albert?"—"Yes; a paleness that suits you admirably, mother, but which did not the less alarm my father and myself!"

"Did your father speak of it?" inquired Mercédès, eagerly.

"No, madame; but do you not remember that he remarked the fact to you?"

"Yes, I do remember!" replied the countess. A servant entered, summoned by Albert's ring of the bell. "Take these flowers into the anteroom or dressing-room," said the viscount; "they make the countess unwell." The footman obeyed his orders. A long pause ensued, which lasted until all the flowers were removed. "What is this name of Monte-Cristo?" inquired the countess, when the servant had taken away the last vase of flowers; "is it a family name, or the name of the estate, or a simple title?"—"I believe, mother, it is merely a simple title. The count purchased an island in the Tuscan Archipelago, and, as he told you to-day, has founded a commandery. You know the same thing was done for Saint Stephen of Florence, Saint George, Constantinian of Parma, and even for the Order of Malta. Except this, he has no pretension to nobility, and calls himself a chance count, although the general opinion at Rome is that the count is a man of very high distinction."

"His manners are admirable!" said the countess; "at least, as far as I could judge in the few moments he remained here."—"They are perfect, mother, so perfect, that they surpass by far all I have known in the leading aristocracy of the three proudest *noblesses* of Europe—the English aristocracy, Spanish aristocracy, and German aristocracy." The countess paused a moment: then, after a slight hesitation, she resumed,—“You have seen, my dear Albert—I ask the question as a mother—you have seen M. de Monte-Cristo in his house;—you are quicksighted,—have much knowledge of the world,—more tact than is usual at your age;—do you

teau-Renaud."—"And what do you suppose is the count's age?" inquired Mercédès, evidently attaching great importance to this question.

"Thirty-five or thirty-six, mother."

"So young! it is impossible," said Mercédès, replying at the same time to what Albert said as well as to her own private reflection.

"It is the truth, however. Three or four times he has said to me, and certainly without the slightest premeditation, at such a period I was five years old, at another ten years old, at another twelve, and I, induced by curiosity, which kept me alive to these details, have compared the dates, and never found him inaccurate. The age of this singular man, who is of no age, is then, I am certain, thirty-five. Besides, mother, remark how vivid his eye, how raven-black his hair, and his brow, though so pale, is free from wrinkles,—he is not only vigorous, but also young." The countess bent her head, as if beneath a heavy wave of bitter thoughts. "And has this man displayed a friendship for you, Albert?" she asked, with a nervous shudder.

"I am inclined to think so."—"And—do—you—like—him?"

"Why, he pleases me in spite of Franz d'Eprenay, who tries to convince me that he is a being returned from the other world." The countess shuddered. "Albert," she said, in a voice which was altered by emotion, "I have always put you on your guard against new acquaintances. Now you are a man, and are able to give me advice; yet I repeat to you, Albert, be prudent."—"Why, my dear mother, it is necessary, in order to make your advice turn to account, that I should know beforehand what I have to distrust. The count never plays, he only drinks pure water tinged with a little sherry, and is so rich that he cannot, without intending to laugh at me, try to borrow money. What, then, have I to fear from him?"

"You are right," said the countess, "and my fears are weakness, especially when directed against a man who has saved your life. How did your father receive him, Albert? It is necessary that we should be more than complaisant to the count. M. de Morcerf is sometimes occupied; his business makes him reflective; and he might, without intending it—"

"Nothing could be in better taste than my father's demeanour, madame," said Albert; "nay, more, he seemed greatly flattered at two or three compliments which the count very skillfully and agreeably paid him with as much ease as if he had known him these thirty years. Each of these little tickling arrows must have pleased my father," added Albert, with a laugh. "And thus they parted the best possible friends; and M. de Morcerf even wished to take him to the Chamber to hear the speakers." The countess made no reply. She fell into so deep a reverie that her eyes gradually closed. The young man, standing up before her, gazed upon her with that filial affection which is more tender and endearing with children whose mothers are still young and handsome. Then, after seeing her eyes closed, and hearing her breathe gently, he believed she had dropped asleep, and left the apartment on tiptoe, closing the door after him with the utmost precaution. "This devil of a fellow," he muttered, shaking his head; "I said at the time he would create a sensation here, and I measure his effect by an infallible thermometer. My mother has noticed him, and he must therefore, perforce, be remarkable." He went down to the stables, not without some slight annoyance, when he remembered that the count of Monte-Cristo had laid his hands on a "turn-out" which sent his bays down to number 2 in the opinion of connoisseurs. "Most decidedly," said he, "men are not equal, and I must beg my father to develop this theorem in the Chamber of Peers."

CHAPTER XLII.

CONSILIER BERTUCCIO.

DEKING this time the count had arrived at his house ; it had taken him six minutes to perform the distance ; but these six minutes were sufficient to induce twenty young men who knew the price of the equipage they had been unable to purchase themselves, to put their horses in a gallop in order to see the rich foreigner who could afford to give 20,000 francs apiece for his horses. The house Ali had chosen, and which was to serve as a town residence to Monte-Cristo, was situated on the right hand as you ascended the Champs Elysées. A thick clump of trees and shrubs rose in the centre, and masked a portion of the front ; around this shrubbery two alleys, like two arms, extended right and left, and formed a carriage-drive from the iron gates to a double portico, on every step of which stood a porcelain vase, filled with flowers. This house, isolated from the rest, had, besides the main entrance, another in the Rue Ponthieu. Even before the coachman had hailed the *conduite*, the massy gates rolled on their hinges : —they had seen the count coming, and at Paris, as everywhere else, he was served with the rapidity of lightning. The coachman entered, and descending the half-circle without slackening his speed, the gates were closed ere the wheels had ceased to sound on the gravel. The carriage stopped at the left side of the portico, two men presented themselves at the carriage-window ; the one was Ali, who, smiling with an expression of the most sincere joy, seemed amply repaid by a mere look from Monte-Cristo. The other bowed respectfully, and offered his arm to assist the count in descending. "Thanks, M. Bertuccio," said the count, springing lightly up the three steps of the portico ; "and the notary ?"—"He is in the small salon, excellency," returned Bertuccio.

"And the cards I ordered to be engraved as soon as you knew the num-

set my foot in France !"—" Ah ! that is different ; the house you purchase is situate at Auteuil." At these words Bertuccio turned pale. " And where is Auteuil ?" asked the count.—" Close here, monsieur," replied the notary—" a little beyond Passy ; a charming situation, in the heart of the Bois de Boulogne."—" So near as that ?" said the count ; " but that is not in the country. What made you choose a house at the gates of Paris, M. Bertuccio ?"

" I !" cried the steward, with a strange expression. " M. le Comte did not charge me to purchase this house. If M. le Comte will recollect—if he will think——"

" Ah, true," observed Monte-Cristo ; " I recollect now. I read the advertisement in one of the papers, and was tempted by the false title, ' a country-house.'"

" It is not yet too late," cried Bertuccio, eagerly ; " and if your excellency will intrust me with the commission, I will find you a better at Enghien, at Fontenay-aux-Roses, or at Bellevue."

" Oh, no," returned Monte-Cristo, negligently ; " since I have this, I will keep it."

" And you are quite right," said the notary, who feared to lose his fee. " It is a charming place, well supplied with spring-water and fine trees ; a comfortable habitation, although abandoned for a long time ; without reckoning the furniture, which, although old, is yet valuable, now that old things are so much sought after. I suppose M. le Comte has the tastes of the day ?"

" To be sure," returned Monte-Cristo ; " it is very convenient, then ?"

" It is more—it is magnificent."

" *Peste!* let us not lose such an opportunity," returned Monte-Cristo. " The deed, if you please, M. le Notaire." And he signed it rapidly, after having first run his eye over that part of the deed in which were specified the situation of the house and the names of the proprietors. " Bertuccio," said he, " give fifty-five thousand francs to monsieur." The steward left the room with a faltering step, and returned with a bundle of bank-notes, which the notary counted like a man who never gives a receipt for money until after legal examination. " And now," demanded the count, " are all the forms complied with ?"

" All, M. le Comte."—" Have you the keys ?"

" They are in the hands of the concierge, who takes care of the house ; but here is the order I have given him to instal Monsieur le Comte in his new possession."—" Very well ;" and Monte-Cristo made a sign with his hand to the notary, which said, " I have no further need of you ; you may go."

" But," observed the honest notary, " you are mistaken, I think, M. le Comte ; it is only fifty thousand francs, everything included."

" And your fee ?"—" Is included in this sum."

" But have you not come from Auteuil here ?"

" Yes, certainly."—" Well, then, it is but fair that you should be paid for your loss of time and trouble," said the count ; and he made a gesture of polite dismissal. The notary left the room backwards, and bowing down to the ground ; it was the first time he had ever met a similar client. " See this gentleman out," said the count to Bertuccio. And the steward followed the notary out of the room. Scarcely was the count alone, when he drew from his pocket a book closed with a lock, and opened it with a key which he wore round his neck, and which never left him. After having sought for a few minutes, he stopped at a leaf which had several notes,

and compared them with the deed of sale, which lay on the table, and recalling his *souvenirs* :—"Auteuil, Rue de la Fontaine, No. 28;" it is indeed the same," said he; "and now, am I to rely upon an avowal extorted by religious or physical terror? However, in an hour I shall know all. Bertuccio!" cried he, striking a light hammer with a pliant handle on a small gong. "Bertuccio!" The steward appeared at the door. "Monsieur Bertuccio," said the count, "did you never tell me that you had travelled in France?"—"In some parts of France—yes, excellency."

"You know the environs of Paris, then?"

"No, excellency, no," returned the steward, with a sort of nervous trembling, which Monte-Cristo, a connoisseur in all emotions, rightly attributed to great disquietude.—"It is unfortunate," returned he, "that you have never visited the environs, for I wish to see my new property this evening, and had you gone with me, you could have given me some useful information."—"To Auteuil!" cried Bertuccio, whose copper complexion became livid—"I go to Auteuil?"

"Well, what is there surprising in that? When I live at Auteuil, you must come there, as you belong to my service." Bertuccio hung down his head before the imperious look of his master, and remained motionless, without making any answer. "Why, what has happened to you?—are you going to make me ring a second time for the carriage?" asked Monte-Cristo, in the same tone that Louis XIV. pronounced the famous, "I have been almost obliged to wait." Bertuccio made but one bound to the ante-chamber, and cried in a hoarse voice—"His excellency's horses!" Monte-Cristo wrote two or three notes, and as he sealed the last, the steward appeared. "Your excellency's carriage is at the door," said he.

"Well, take your hat and gloves," returned Monte-Cristo.

"Am I to accompany you, M. le Comte?" cried Bertuccio.

"Certainly, you must give your orders, for I intend residing at the

arance and solemnity of a dramatic episode. The carriage stopped, footman sprang off the box, and opened the door. "Well," said the count, "you do not get out, M. Bertuccio—you are going to stay in the carriage, then? What are you thinking of this evening?" Bertuccio stepped out, and offered his shoulder to the count, who, this time, leaned on it as he descended the three steps of the carriage. "Knock," said the count, "and announce me." Bertuccio knocked, the door opened, the concierge appeared. "What is it?" asked he.

"It is your new master, my good fellow," said the footman. And he held out to the concierge the notary's order.

"The house is sold, then?" demanded the concierge; "and this gentleman is coming to live here?"

"Yes, my friend," returned the count; "and I will endeavour to give no cause to regret your old master."—"Oh, monsieur," said the concierge, "I shall not have much cause to regret him, for he came here seldom; it is five years since he was here last; and he did well to the house, for it did not bring him in anything at all."

"What was the name of your old master?" said Monte-Cristo.

"M. le Marquis de Saint-Méran. Ah, I am sure he has not sold the house for what he gave for it."

"The marquis de Saint-Méran!" returned the count. "The name is unknown to me; the marquis de Saint-Méran!" and he appeared to hesitate.—"An old gentleman," continued the concierge, "a staunch member of the Bourbons; he had an only daughter, who married M. de Fort, who had been the *procureur du roi* at Nîmes, and afterwards at Aïlles." Monte-Cristo glanced at Bertuccio, who became whiter than wall against which he leaned to prevent himself from falling. "And is this daughter dead?" demanded Monte-Cristo; "I fancy I have heard of her."—"Yes, monsieur, one-and-twenty years ago; and since we have not seen the poor marquis three times."

"Thanks, thanks," said Monte-Cristo, judging from the steward's utterance that he could not stretch the cord further without danger of breaking it. "Give me a light."

"Shall I accompany you, monsieur?"

"No, it is unnecessary; Bertuccio will show me a light." And Monte-Cristo accompanied these words by the gift of two pieces of gold, which secured a torrent of thanks and blessings from the concierge. "Ah, monsieur," said he, after having vainly searched on the mantelpiece and shelves, "I have not got any candles."—"Take one of the carriages," Bertuccio, said the count, "and show me the apartments." The count obeyed in silence, but it was easy to see, from the manner in which the hand that held the light trembled, how much it cost him to do so. They went over a tolerably large ground-floor, a first floor consisting of a salon, a bath-room, and two bedrooms; by one of these beds arrived at a winding staircase that opened on to the garden.

"Ah! here is a private staircase," said the count; "that is convenient. Let me, M. Bertuccio, and go first; we will see where it leads to."—"Monsieur," replied Bertuccio, "it leads to the garden."

"And, pray, how do you know that?"

"I ought to do so, at least."

"Well, let us be sure of that." Bertuccio sighed, and went on first: the count followed, in reality, to the garden. At the outer door the steward paused. "Good night, Monsieur Bertuccio," said the count. But he to whom he spoke stood stupefied, bewildered, stunned; his haggard eyes glanced round, as if

in search of the traces of some terrible event, and with his clenched hands he seemed striving to shut out some horrible recollections. "Well!" insisted the count. "No, no," cried Bertuccio, setting down the lantern at the angle of the interior wall. "No, monsieur, it is impossible; I can go no further."

"What does this mean?" demanded the irresistible voice of Monte-Cristo.—"Why, you must see, M. le Comte," cried the steward, "that this is not natural; that, having a house to purchase, you purchase it exactly at Auteuil: and that, purchasing it at Auteuil, this house should be No. 28, Rue de la Fontaine. Oh! why did I not tell you all? I am sure you would not have forced me to come. I hoped your house would have been some other one than this; as if there was not another house at Auteuil than that of the assassination!"—"Ah! ah!" cried Monte-Cristo, stopping suddenly, "what words did you utter? Devil of a man, Corsican that you are—always mysteries or superstitions. Come, take the lantern, and let us visit the garden; you are not afraid of ghosts with me, I hope?" Bertuccio raised the lantern, and obeyed. The door, as it opened, disclosed a gloomy sky, in which the moon strove vainly to struggle through a sea of clouds that covered her with their sombre wave, that she illumined for an instant, and was then lost in the darkness. The steward wished to turn to the left. "No, no, monsieur," said Monte-Cristo. "What is the use of following the alleys? Here is a beautiful lawn; let us go on straight forwards."

Bertuccio wiped the perspiration from his brow, but obeyed; however, he continued to take the left hand. Monte-Cristo, on the contrary, took the right hand; arrived near a clump of trees, he stopped. The steward could not restrain himself. "Move, monsieur—move away, I entreat you; you are exactly in the spot!"

"What spot?"—"Where he fell."

veins of the poor steward,—“The Abbé Busoni, then, told me an untruth,” said he, “when, after his journey in France, in 1829, he sent you to me, with a letter of recommendation, in which he enumerated all your valuable qualities. Well, I shall write to the abbé ; I shall render him responsible for his *protégé’s* misconduct, and I shall soon know all about this assassination. Only I warn you, that when I reside in a country, I conform to all its code, and I have no wish to put myself within the compass of the French laws for your sake.”

“Oh, do not do that, excellency ; I have always served you faithfully,” cried Bertuccio, in despair. “I have always been an honest man, and, as far as lay in my power, I have done good.”

“I do not deny it,” returned the count ; “but why are you thus agitated ? It is a bad sign ; a quiet conscience does not occasion such paleness in the cheeks, and such fear in the hands of a man.”

“But, M. le Comte,” replied Bertuccio, hesitatingly, “did not M. l’Abbé Busoni, who heard my confession in the prison at Nîmes, tell you I had a heavy reproach to make against myself ?”——“Yes ; but as he said you would make an excellent steward, I concluded you had stolen—that was all.”

“Oh, Monsieur le Comte !” returned Bertuccio, contemptuously.

“Or, as you are a Corsican, that you had been unable to resist the desire of making a *peau*, as you call it.”——“Yes, my good master,” cried Bertuccio, casting himself at the count’s feet, “it was simply a vengeance—nothing else.”——“I understand that, but I do not understand what it is that galvanizes you in this manner.”——“But, monsieur, it is very natural,” returned Bertuccio, “since it was in this house that my vengeance was accomplished.”——“What ! my house ?”——“Oh, M. le Comte, it was not yours, then.”——“Whose, then ? M. le Marquis de Saint-Méran, I think, the concierge said. What had you to revenge on the Marquis de Saint-Méran ?”——“Oh, it was not on him, monsieur ; it was on another.”

“This is strange,” returned Monte-Cristo, seeming to yield to his reflections, “that you should find yourself without any preparation in a house where the event happened that causes you so much remorse.”——“Monsieur,” said the steward, “it is fatality, I am sure. First, you purchase a house at Auteuil—this house is the one where I have committed an assassination ; you descend to the garden by the same staircase by which he descended ; you stop at the spot where he received the blow ; and two paces further is the grave in which he had just buried his child. This is not chance ; for chance, in this case, resembles Providence too much.”

“Well, M. le Corse, let us suppose it is Providence. I always suppose anything people please ; and, besides, you must concede something to diseased minds. Come, collect yourself, and tell me all.”——“I have never related it but once, and that was to the Abbé Busoni. Such things,” continued Bertuccio, shaking his head, “are only related under the seal of confession.”——“Then,” said the count, “I refer you to your confessor. Turn Chartreux or Trappist, and relate your secrets ; but, as for me, I do not like any one who is alarmed by such phantasms, and I do not choose that my servants should be afraid to walk in the garden of an evening. I confess I am not very desirous of a visit from the *commissaire de police* ; for, in Italy, justice is only paid when silent—in France she is paid only when she speaks. *Peste !* I thought you somewhat Corsican, a great deal smuggler, and an excellent steward ; but I see you have other strings to your bow. You are no longer in my service, Monsieur Bertuccio.”

“Oh, M. le Comte, M. le Comte !” cried the steward, struck with terror

at this threat, "if that is the only reason I cannot remain in your service, I will tell all ; for if I quit you, it will only be to go to the scaffold."—"That is different," replied Monte-Cristo ; "but if you intend to tell an untruth, reflect it were better not to speak at all."

"No, monsieur, I swear to you, by my hopes of salvation, I will tell you all, for the Abbé Busoni himself only knew a part of my secret ; but, I pray you, go away from that plane-tree : the moon is just bursting through the clouds, and there, standing where you do, and wrapped in that cloak that conceals your figure, you remind me of M. de Villefort."—"What !" cried Monte-Cristo, "it was M. de Villefort ?"—"Your excellency knows him ?"—"The former *procureur du roi* at Nîmes ?"—"Yes."—"Who married the Count de Saint-Méran's daughter ?"—"Yes."—"Who enjoyed the reputation of being the most severe, the most upright, the most rigid magistrate on the bench ?"—"Well, monsieur," said Bertuccio, "this man with this spotless reputation"—"Well ?"—"Was a villain."—"Bah !" replied Monte-Cristo, "impossible !"—"It is as I tell you."—"Ah, really !" said Monte-Cristo. "Have you proof of this ?"—"I had it."—"And you have lost it ; how stupid !"—"Yes ; but by careful search it might be recovered."—"Really," returned the count, "relate it to me, for it begins to interest me." And the count, humming an air from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, went to sit down on a bench, whilst Bertuccio followed him, collecting his thoughts. Bertuccio remained standing before him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE VENDETTA.



and, if I had any money, he prayed me to leave it for him at Nîmes, with an aubergiste with whom I had dealings."—"In the smuggling line?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Eh, M. le Comte? Every one must live."—"Certainly; continue."

"I loved my brother tenderly, as I told your excellency, and I resolved not to send the money, but to take it to him myself. I possessed a thousand francs (£40). I left five hundred with Assunta, my sister-in-law, and with the other five hundred I set off for Nîmes. It was easy to do so; and as I had my boat and a lading to take in at sea, everything favoured my project. But, after we had taken in our cargo, the wind became contrary, so that we were four or five days without being able to enter the Rhône. At last, however, we succeeded, and worked up to Arles. I left the boat between Bellegarde and Beaucaire, and took the road to Nîmes."

"We are getting to the story now?"

"Yes, your excellency; excuse me, but, as you will see, I only tell you what is absolutely necessary. Just at this time the famous massacres of the south of France took place. Two or three brigands, called Trestailon, Truphemy, and Graffan, publicly assassinated everybody whom they suspected of Bonapartism. You have doubtless heard of these massacres, M. le Comte?"—"Vaguely; I was far from France at that period. Go on."

"As I entered Nîmes, I literally waded in blood; at every step you encountered dead bodies and bands of the murderers, who killed, plundered, and burned. At the sight of this slaughter and devastation I became terrified, not for myself—for I, a simple Corsican fisherman, had nothing to fear; on the contrary, that time was most favourable for us smugglers—but for my brother, a soldier of the empire, returning from the army of the Loire, with his uniform and his epaulets, there was everything to apprehend. I hastened to the aubergiste. My presages had been but too true: my brother had arrived the previous evening at Nîmes, and, at the very door of the house where he was about to demand hospitality, he had been assassinated. I did all in my power to discover the murderers, but no one durst tell me their names, so much were they dreaded. I then thought of that French justice of which I had heard so much, and which feared nothing, and I went to the *procureur du roi*."—"And this *procureur du roi* was named Villefort?" asked Monte-Cristo carelessly.

"Yes, your excellency; he came from Marseilles, where he had been deputy procureur. His zeal had procured him advancement, and he was said to be one of the first who had informed the government of the departure from the island of Elba."—"Then," said Monte-Cristo, "you went to him?"

"'Monsieur,' I said, 'my brother was assassinated yesterday in the streets of Nîmes, I know not by whom, but it is your duty to find out. You are the head of justice here, and it is for justice to avenge those who have been unable to protect.'—"Who was your brother?" asked he.—"A lieutenant in the Corsican battalion."—"A soldier of the usurper, then?"—"A soldier of the French army."—"Well," replied he, 'he has smitten with the sword, and has perished by the sword.'—"You are mistaken, monsieur," I replied; 'he has perished by the poniard.'—"What do you want me to do?" asked the magistrate.—"I have already told you—avenge him."—"On whom?"—"On his murderers."—"How should I know who they are?"—"Order them to be sought for."—"Why, your brother has been involved in a quarrel, and killed in a duel. All these old soldiers commit excesses which were tolerated in the time of the emperor, but

"I am philosophy, M. Bertuccio," interrupted the count; "you have done a little of everything in your life."—"Oh, excellency."

"Not that philosophy at half-past ten at night is somewhat late; yet I have no other observation to make, for what you say is correct, which is more than can be said for all philosophy."

"My journeys became more and more extensive and more productive. Assunta took care of all, and our little fortune increased. One day that I was starting out on an expedition, 'Go,' said she; 'at your return I will give you a surprise.' I questioned her, but in vain; she would tell me nothing, and I departed. Our expedition lasted nearly six weeks; we had been to France to take in silk, to Leghorn for English cottons, and we ran our cargo without opposition, and returned home full of joy. When I entered the house, the first thing I beheld in the centre of Assunta's chamber was a cradle that might be called sumptuous compared with the rest of the furniture, and in it a baby of seven or eight months old. I uttered a cry of joy; the only moments of sadness I had known since the assassination of the *gouverneur du roi* were caused by the recollection that I had abandoned this child. For the assassination itself I had never felt any remorse, even Assunta had guessed all. She had profited by my absence, and I found her with the half of the linen, and having written down the day and hour at which I had deposited the child at the hospital, had set out for Paris, and had reclaimed it. No objection was raised, and the infant was given up to her. Ah, I confess, M. le Comte, when I saw this poor creature sleeping peacefully in its cradle, I felt my eyes filled with tears. 'Ah, Assunta,' cried I, 'you are an excellent woman, and Heaven will bless you.'—"This," said Monte-Cristo, "is less correct than your philosophy, it is only faith."

"Alas! your excellency is right," replied Bertuccio, "and God made this infant the instrument of our punishment. Never did a perverse nature

so had several of these animals, whose tricks had greatly diverted him, doubtless, suggested this idea to him. 'Monkeys are not found in woods chained to trees,' said I; 'confess how you obtained this animal.' Benedetto maintained the truth of what he had said, and accompanied it with details that did more honour to his imagination than to his veracity. He became angry; he began to laugh; I threatened to strike him, and he made two steps backwards. 'You cannot beat me,' said he; 'you have no right, for you are not my father.'

"We never knew who had revealed this fatal secret, which we had so carefully concealed from him; however, it was this answer, in which the child's whole character revealed itself, that almost terrified me, and my son fell without touching him. The boy triumphed, and this victory rendered him so audacious, that all the money of Assunta, whose affection for him seemed to increase as he became more unworthy of it, was spent in prices she knew not how to contend against, and follies she had not the courage to prevent. When I was at Rogliano everything went on properly; but no sooner was my back turned than Benedetto became master, and everything went ill. When he was only eleven, he chose his companions from among the young men of eighteen or twenty, the worst characters in Bastia, or, indeed, in Corsica: and they had already, for some pieces of mischief, been several times threatened with a prosecution. I became alarmed, as any prosecution might be attended with serious consequences. I was compelled, at this period, to leave Corsica on an important expedition; I reflected for a long time, and with the hope of averting some impending misfortune, I resolved that Benedetto should accompany me. I hoped that the active and laborious life of a smuggler, with the severe discipline on board, would have a salutary effect on his character, well as, if not quite, corrupted. I spoke to Benedetto alone, and proposed him to accompany me, endeavouring to tempt him by all the promises most likely to dazzle the imagination of a child of twelve years old. He heard me patiently; and when I had finished, burst out laughing.

"Are you mad, uncle?" (he called me by this name when he was in a good humour); 'do you think I am going to change the life I lead for our mode of existence—my agreeable indolence for the hard and precious toil you impose on yourself? exposed to the bitter frost at night, and the scorching heat by day, compelled to conceal yourself, and when you are perceived, receive a volley of balls, and all to earn a paltry sum? No, by, I have as much money as I want; mother Assunta always furnishes me when I ask for it! You see that I should be a fool to accept your offer.' The arguments, and this audacity, perfectly stupefied me. Benedetto rejoined his associates, and I saw him from a distance point me out as a fool."

"Sweet child!" murmured Monte-Cristo.

"Oh! had he been my own son," replied Bertuccio, "or even my nephew, would have brought him back to the right road, for the knowledge that you are doing your duty gives you strength; but the idea that I was striking a child whose father I had killed, made it impossible for me to punish him. I gave my sister, who constantly defended the unfortunate boy, good advice; and as she confessed that she had several times missed money to a considerable amount, I showed her a safe place in which to conceal our little treasure for the future. My mind was already made up; Benedetto could read, write, and cipher perfectly; for when the fit seized him, he learned more in a day than others in a week; my intention was to enter him as clerk in some ship, and without letting him know any-

thing of my plan, to convey him some morning on board : by this means his future treatment would depend upon his own conduct. I set off for France, after having fixed upon the plan. All our cargo was to be landed in the Gulf of Lyons ; and this plan was the more difficult, since we were in 1829. The most perfect tranquillity was restored, and the vigilance of the custom-house officers was redoubled, and their strictness was increased at this time, in consequence of the fair of Beaucaire.

"Our expedition commenced favourably. We anchored our bark, which had a double hold, where our goods were concealed, amidst a number of other vessels that bordered the banks of the Rhône from Beaucaire to Arles. On our arrival there we began to discharge our cargo in the night, and to convey it into the town, by the help of the aubergistes with whom we were connected. Whether success rendered us imprudent, or whether we were betrayed, I know not ; but one evening, about five o'clock, our little cabin-boy hastened, breathless, to inform us that he had seen a detachment of custom-house officers advancing in our direction. It was not their vicinity that alarmed us, for detachments were constantly patrolling along the banks of the Rhône, but the care, according to the boy's account, they took to avoid being seen. In an instant we were on the alert, but it was too late ; our vessel was surrounded, and amongst the custom-house officers I observed several gendarmes ; and, as terrified at the sight of their uniforms as I was brave at the sight of any other, I sprang into the hold, opened a port, and dropped into the river, dived, and only rose at intervals to breathe, until I reached a cutting that led from the Rhône to the canal that runs from Beaucaire to Aigues Mortes. I was now safe, for I could swim along the cutting without being seen, and I reached the canal in safety. I had designedly taken this direction. I have already told your excellency of an aubergiste of Nîmes who had set up a little inn

of announcing our presence. My intention was, if Caderousse was alone, to acquaint him with my presence, finish the meal the custom-house officers had interrupted, and profit by the threatened storm to return to the Rhône, and ascertain the state of our vessel and its crew. I stepped into the shed, and it was fortunate I did so, for at that moment Caderousse entered with a stranger.

"I waited patiently, not to overhear what they said, but because I could do nothing else; besides, the same thing had occurred often before. The man who was with Caderousse was evidently a stranger to the South of France; he was one of those merchants who come to sell jewellery at the fair of Beaucaire, and who during the month the fair lasts, and during which there is so great an influx of merchants and customers from all parts of Europe, often have dealings to the amount of 100,000 to 150,000 francs (£4,000 to £6,000). Caderousse entered hastily. Then, seeing that the room was, as usual, empty, and only guarded by the dog, he called to his wife, 'Hilloa, Carconte!' said he, 'the worthy priest has not deceived us; the diamond is real.' An exclamation of joy was heard, and the staircase creaked beneath a feeble step. 'What do you say?' asked his wife, pale as death.

"I say that the diamond is real, and that this gentleman, one of the first jewellers of Paris, will give us 50,000 francs for it (£2,000). Only, in order to satisfy himself it really belongs to us, he wishes you to relate to him, as I have done already, the miraculous manner in which the diamond came into our possession. In the mean time, please to sit down, monsieur, and I will fetch you some refreshment.' The jeweller examined attentively the interior of the inn and visible poverty of the persons who were about to sell him a diamond that seemed to have come from the casket of a prince. 'Relate your story, madame,' said he, wishing, no doubt, to profit by the absence of the husband, so that the latter could not influence the wife's story, to see if the two recitals tallied.

"Oh! returned she, 'it was a gift of Heaven! My husband was a great friend, in 1814 or 1815, of a sailor named Edmond Dantès. This poor fellow, whom Caderousse had forgotten, had not forgotten him, and at his death he bequeathed this diamond to him.'—'But how did he obtain it?' asked the jeweller; 'had he it before he was imprisoned?'—'No, monsieur; but it appears that in prison he made the acquaintance of a rich Englishman; and as in prison he fell sick, and Dantès took the same care of him as if he had been his brother, the Englishman, when he was set free, gave this stone to Dantès, who, less fortunate, died, and, in his turn, left it us, and charged the excellent abbé, who was here this morning, to deliver it.'—'The same story!' muttered the jeweller; 'and improbable as it seems at first, the history may be true. There's only the price we are not agreed about.'—'How not agreed about?' said Caderousse. 'I thought we agreed for the price I asked.'—'That is,' replied the jeweller, 'I offered 40,000 francs.'—'Forty thousand!' cried La Carconte; 'we will not part with it for that sum. The abbé told us it was worth 50,000 without the setting.'

"What was the abbé's name?' asked the indefatigable questioner.—'The Abbe Busoni,' said La Carconte.—'He was a foreigner?'—'An Italian, from the neighbourhood of Mantua, I believe.'—'Let me see this diamond again,' replied the jeweller; 'the first time you are often mistaken as to the value of a stone.' Caderousse took from his pocket a small case of black shagreen, opened, and gave it to the jeweller. At the

sight of the diamond, which was as large as a hazel-nut, La Carconte's eyes sparkled with cupidity."

"And what did you think of this fine story, eavesdropper?" said Monte-Cristo; "did you credit it?"

"Yes, your excellency. I did not look on Caderousse as a bad man, and I thought him incapable of committing a crime, or even a theft."

"That did more honour to your heart than to your experience, M. Bertuccio. Had you known this Edmond Dantès, of whom they spoke?"

"No, your excellency, I had never heard of him before, and never but once afterwards, and that was from the Abbé Busoni himself, when I saw him in the prison at Nîmes."—"Go on."

"The jeweller took the ring, and drawing from his pocket a pair of steel pliers and a small set of copper scales, taking the stone out of its setting, he weighed it carefully. 'I will give you 45,000,' said he, 'but not a half-penny more; besides, as that is the exact value of the stone, I brought just that sum with me.'—'Oh, that's no matter,' replied Caderousse, 'I will go back with you to fetch the other 5,000 francs.'—'No,' returned the jeweller, giving back the diamond and the ring to Caderousse—'no, it is worth no more; and I am sorry I offered so much, for the stone has a flaw in it, which I had not seen. However, I will not go from my word, and I will give 45,000.'—'At least, replace the diamond in the ring,' said La Carconte, sharply.—'Ah, true,' replied the jeweller, and he reset the stone.—'No matter,' observed Caderousse, replacing the box in his pocket, 'some one else will purchase it.'—'Yes,' continued the jeweller; 'but some one else will not be so easy as I am, or content himself with the same story. It is not natural that a man like you should possess such a diamond. He will inform against you. You will have to find the Abbé Busoni; and abbés who give diamonds worth two thousand louis are rare. Justice would seize it, and put you in prison, if at the end of February, 1806,

"The abbé told me it was worth 50,000 francs," muttered Caderousse. 'Come, come—give it to me! What a strange fellow you are!' said the jeweller, taking the diamond from his hand. 'I give you 45,000 francs—that is, 2,500 livres of income,—a fortune such as I wish I had myself, and you are not satisfied!'—'And the five-and-forty thousand francs,' inquired Caderousse in a hoarse voice, 'where are they? Come—let us see them!'—'Here they are,' replied the jeweller; and he counted out upon the table 15,000 francs in gold, and 30,000 francs in bank-notes.

"Wait whilst I light the lamp," said La Carconte; 'it is growing dark, and there may be some mistake.' In fact, the night had come on during this conversation, and with the night the storm which had been threatening for the last half-hour. The thunder was heard growling in the distance; but neither the jeweller, nor Caderousse, nor La Carconte seemed to heed it, absorbed as they were all three with the demon of gain. I myself felt a strange kind of fascination at the sight of all this gold and all these bank-notes; it seemed to me that I was in a dream; and, as it always happens in a dream, I felt myself riveted to the spot. Caderousse counted and again counted the gold and the notes; then handed them to his wife, who counted and counted them again in her turn. During this time, the jeweller made the diamond play and sparkle beneath the ray of the lamp, and the gem threw out jets of light which made him unmindful of those which—precursors of the storm—began to play in at the windows. 'Well,' inquired the jeweller, 'is the cash all right?'

"Yes," said Caderousse. 'Give me the pocket-book, La Carconte, and find a bag somewhere.'

"La Carconte went to a cupboard, and returned with an old leathern pocket-book, from which she took some greasy letters, and put in their place the bank-notes, and a bag, in which were at the moment two or three crowns of six livres each, and which, in all probability, formed the entire fortune of the miserable couple. 'There,' said Caderousse; 'and now, although you have wronged us of perhaps 10,000 francs, will you have your supper with us? I invite you with good-will.'—'Thank you,' replied the jeweller; 'it must be getting late, and I must return to Beaucaire—my wife will be getting uneasy.' He drew out his watch, and exclaimed, '*Morbleu!* nearly nine o'clock!—why, I shall not get back to Beaucaire before midnight! Good-night, my dears. If the Abbé Busoni should by any accident return, think of me.'—'In another week you will have left Beaucaire,' remarked Caderousse, 'for the fair finishes in a few days.'—'True; but that is no consequence. Write to me at Paris, to M. Joannes, in the Palais Royal, Stone Gallery, No. 45: I will make the journey on purpose to see him, if it is worth while.' At this moment there was a tremendous clap of thunder, accompanied by a flash of lightning so vivid, that it quite eclipsed the light of the lamp.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Caderousse. 'You cannot think of going out in such weather as this.'—'Oh, I am not afraid of thunder!' said the jeweller.—'And then there are robbers,' said La Carconte. 'The road is never very safe during fair time.'—'Oh! as to the robbers,' said Joannes, 'here is something for them,' and he drew from his pocket a pair of small pistols, loaded to the muzzle. 'Here,' said he, 'are dogs who bark and bite at the same time: they are for the two first who shall have a longing for your diamond, Daddy Caderousse.'

"Caderousse and his wife again interchanged a meaning look. It seemed as though they were both inspired at the same time with some horrible thought. 'Well, then, a good journey to you,' said Caderousse.

—‘Thank ye,’ replied the jeweller. He then took his cane, which he had placed against an old cupboard, and went out. At the moment when he opened the door, such a gust of wind came in that the lamp was nearly extinguished. ‘Oh!’ said he, ‘this is very nice weather; and two leagues to go in such a storm!’—‘Remain,’ said Caderousse. ‘You can sleep here.’—‘Yes; do stay,’ added La Carconte, in a tremulous voice; ‘we will take every care of you.’—‘No; I must sleep at Beaucaire. So, once more, good-night!’ Caderousse followed him slowly to the threshold. ‘I can neither see heaven nor earth!’ said the jeweller, who was outside the door. ‘Do I turn to the right, or to the left hand?’—‘To the right,’ said Caderousse. ‘You cannot go wrong—the road is bordered by trees on both sides.’—‘Good—all right!’ said a voice almost lost in the distance. ‘Close the door,’ said La Carconte; ‘I do not like open doors when it thunders.’—‘Particularly when there is money in the house, eh?’ answered Caderousse, double-locking the door.

“He came into the room, went to the cupboard, took out the bag and pocket-book, and both began, for the third time, to count their gold and bank-notes. I never saw such an expression of cupidity as the flickering lamp revealed in the two countenances. The woman, especially, was hideous: the feverish tremulousness she usually had was redoubled: her countenance had become livid, and her eyes resembled burning coals. ‘Why,’ she inquired in a hoarse voice, ‘did you invite him to sleep here to-night?’—‘Why?’ said Caderousse with a shudder; ‘why, that he might not have the trouble of returning to Beaucaire.’—‘Ah!’ responded the woman, with an expression impossible to render; ‘I thought it was for something else.’—‘Woman, woman—why do you have such ideas?’ cried Caderousse; ‘or, if you have them, why don’t you keep them to yourself?’—‘Well,’ said La Carconte, after a moment’s pause, ‘you are

CHAPTER XLV.

THE RAIN OF BLOOD.

"As the jeweller returned to the apartment, he cast around him a scrutinising glance—but there was nothing to excite suspicion, if it existed not, or to confirm it, if already awakened. Caderousse's hands still grasped his gold and bank-notes, and La Carconte called up her sweetest smiles while welcoming the reappearance of their guest. 'Heyday!' said the jeweller, 'you seem, my good friends, to have had some fears respecting the accuracy of your money, by counting it over so carefully directly I was gone.'—'No, no,' answered Caderousse, 'that was not my reason, I can assure you; but the circumstances by which we have become possessed of this wealth are so unexpected, as to make us scarcely credit our good fortune, and it is only by placing the actual proof of our riches before our eyes that we can persuade ourselves the whole affair is not a dream.' The jeweller smiled.—'Have you any other guests in your house?' inquired he.—'Nobody but ourselves,' replied Caderousse; 'the fact is, we do not lodge travellers—indeed, our auberge is so near to the town, that nobody would think of stopping here.'—'Then I am afraid I shall very much inconvenience you!'—'Oh, dear me, no!—indeed, good sir, you will not,' said La Carconte, in her most gracious manner. 'I vow and protest your passing the night under shelter of our poor roof will not make the slightest difference in the world to us.'—'But where will you manage to stow me?'—'In the chamber overhead.'—'Surely that is where you yourselves sleep?'—'Never mind that; we have a second bed in the adjoining room.' Caderousse stared at his wife with much astonishment.

"The jeweller, meanwhile, was humming a song as he stood warming himself by the bright, cheering blaze of a large fagot kindled by the attentive Carconte, to dry the wet garments of her guest; and this done, she next occupied herself in arranging his supper, by spreading a napkin at the end of the table, and placing on it the slender remains of their dinner, to which she added three or four fresh-laid eggs. Caderousse had once more parted with his treasures—the bank-notes were replaced in the pocket-book, the gold put back into the bag, and the whole carefully locked in the *armoire*, which formed his stronghold; he then commenced pacing the room with a pensive and gloomy air, glancing from time to time at the jeweller, who stood reeking with the steam from his wet clothes, and merely changing his place on the warm hearth, to enable the whole of the garments to be in turns dried by the genial heat that issued from it.

"'Now then, my dear sir,' said La Carconte, as she placed a bottle of wine on the table, 'supper is ready whenever you are inclined to partake of it.'—'But you are going to sit down with me, are you not?' asked Joannes.—'I shall not take any supper to-night,' said Caderousse.—'We dined so very late,' hastily interposed La Carconte.—'Then it seems I am to eat alone,' remarked the jeweller.—'Oh, we shall have the pleasure of waiting upon you,' answered La Carconte, with an eager attention she was not accustomed to manifest even to guests who paid for what they took.

"From one minute to another, Caderousse darted on his wife keen, searching glances, but rapid as the lightning-flash. The storm still continued. 'There! there!' said La Carconte; 'do you hear that? Upon my word, you did well to return hither.'—'Nevertheless,' replied the jeweller, 'if by the time I have finished my supper the tempest has at all

abated, I shall make another attempt to complete my journey.'—'Oh,' said Caderousse, shaking his head, 'there is not the slightest chance of its abating—it is the mistral, and that will be sure to last till to-morrow morning.' He then sighed heavily.—'Well?' said the jeweller, as he placed himself at table, 'all I can say is, so much the worse for those who are abroad and cannot obtain a shelter.'—'Ah!' chimed in La Carconte, 'they will have a wretched night of it, be they who they may.'

"The jeweller commenced eating his supper, and the woman, who was ordinarily so querulous and indifferent to all who approached her, was suddenly transformed into the most smiling and attentive hostess. Had the unhappy man on whom she lavished her assiduities been previously acquainted with her, so sudden an alteration might well have excited suspicion in his mind, or at least have greatly astonished him. Caderousse, meanwhile, continued in gloomy silence to pace the room, sedulously avoiding the sight of his guest; but as soon as the stranger had completed his repast, the agitated aubergiste went eagerly to the door and opened it. 'The storm seems over,' said he. But as if to contradict his statement, at that instant a violent clap of thunder seemed to shake the house to its very foundation, while a sudden gust of wind, mingled with rain, extinguished the lamp he held in his hand. Trembling and awe-struck, Caderousse hastily shut the door and returned to his guest, while La Carconte lighted a candle by the smouldering ashes that glimmered on the hearth. 'You must be tired,' said she to the jeweller; 'I have spread a pair of my finest and whitest sheets on your bed, so you have nothing to do but to sleep as soundly as I wish you may—you can easily find your room; it is exactly over this.'

"Joannes remained a short time listening whether the storm seemed to abate in its fury, but a brief space of time sufficed to assure him that, far

buried between his two hands. La Carconte continued to gaze on him for some time in contemptuous silence, then, shrugging up her shoulders, she took her seat immediately opposite to him. At this moment the expiring embers threw up a fresh flame from the kindling of a piece of wood that lay near, and a bright gleam was thrown on the scene and the actors in it. La Carconte still kept her eyes fixed on her husband, but as he made no sign of changing his position, she extended her hard, bony hand, and touched him on the forehead.

"Caderousse shuddered. The woman's lips seemed to move, as though she were talking ; but whether she merely spoke in an undertone, or that my senses were dulled by sleep, I did not catch a word she uttered. Confused sights and sounds seemed to float before me, and gradually I fell into a deep heavy sleep. How long I had been in this unconscious state I know not, when I was suddenly aroused by the report of a pistol, followed by a fearful cry. Weak and tottering footsteps resounded across the chamber above me, and the next instant a dull, heavy weight seemed to fall powerless on the staircase. I had not yet fully recovered my recollection, when again I heard groans, mingled with half-stifled cries, as if from persons engaged in a deadly struggle. These evidences of the perpetration of some violent deed effectually roused me from my drowsy lethargy. Hastily raising myself on one arm, I looked around, but all was dark ; and it seemed to me as if the rain must have penetrated through the flooring of the room above, for some kind of moisture appeared to fall, drop by drop, upon my forehead, and when I passed my hand across my brow, I felt it wet and clammy.

"To the fearful noises that had awakened me had succeeded the most perfect silence—unbroken, save by the footsteps of a man walking about in the chamber above. By the creaking of the staircase I judged the individual, whoever he was, was proceeding to the lower apartment. In another minute I heard some person moving there, and, looking through, saw a man stooping towards the fire to light a candle he held in his hand. As he turned round, I recognised the features of Caderousse—pale, ghastly, and convulsed—while the front and sleeves of his dress were covered with blood. Having obtained the light he had evidently descended to seek, he hurried upstairs again, and once more I heard his rapid and uneasy step in the chamber above. Ere long he came below, holding in his hand the small shagreen case, which he opened, to assure himself it contained the diamond,—seemed to hesitate as to which pocket he should put it in, then, as if dissatisfied with the security of either pocket, he deposited it in his red handkerchief, which he carefully rolled round his head. After this he took from his cupboard the bank-notes and gold he had put there, thrust the one into the pocket of his trousers, and the other into that of his waistcoat, hastily tied up a small bundle of linen, and rushing towards the door, disappeared in the darkness of the night.

"Then all became clear and manifest to me ; and I reproached myself with what had happened, as though I myself had done the guilty deed. I fancied that I still heard faint moans, and imagining that the unfortunate jeweller might not be quite dead, I determined to go to his relief, by way of atoning in some slight degree, not for the crime I had committed, but for that which I had not endeavoured to prevent ; for this purpose I applied all the strength I possessed to force an entrance from the cramped spot in which I lay to the adjoining room ; the badly-arranged planks which alone divided me from it yielded to my efforts, and I found myself in the house ; hastily snatching up the lighted candle, I hurried to the

staircase ; towards the middle of it I stumbled over a human body lying quite across the stairs. As I stooped to raise it, I discovered in the agonised features those of La Carconte. The pistol I had heard had doubtless been discharged at the unfortunate woman, whose throat it had frightfully lacerated, leaving a gaping wound from which, as well as the mouth, the blood was welling in sanguinary streams. Finding the miserable creature past all human aid, I strode past her, and ascended to the sleeping chamber, which presented an appearance of the wildest disorder. The furniture had been knocked over in the deadly struggle that had taken place there, and the sheets, to which the unfortunate jeweller had doubtless clung, were dragged across the room ; the murdered man lay on the ground, his head leaning against the wall, weltering in a gory stream, poured forth from three large wounds in his breast ; there was a fourth gash, but the blood was prevented escaping in consequence of the weapon (a large table-knife) still sticking in it.

" I stumbled over some object ; I stooped to examine—it was the second pistol, which had not gone off, probably from the powder being wet. I approached the jeweller, who was not quite dead, and at the sound of my footsteps, causing as they did the creaking of the floor, he opened his eyes, fixed them on me with an anxious and inquiring gaze, moved his lips as though trying to speak, then, overcome by the effort, fell back and expired. This appalling sight almost bereft me of my senses, and finding that I could no longer be of service to any one in the house, my only desire was to fly from such an accumulation of horrors as quickly as I could ; almost distracted, I rushed towards the staircase, clasping my burning temples with both hands, and uttering cries of horror. Upon reaching the room below, I found five or six custom-house officers, accompanied by an armed troop of soldiery, who immediately seized me, ere, indeed, I had sufficiently

prise and terror ; and without a word I suffered myself to be handcuffed and tied to a horse's tail, in which disgraceful plight I arrived at Nîmes.

"It seems I had been tracked by a douanier, who had lost sight of me near the auberge ; feeling assured that I intended to pass the night there, he had returned to summon his comrades, who just arrived in time to hear the report of the pistol, and to take me in the midst of such circumstantial proofs of my guilt as rendered all hopes of proving my innocence utterly at an end. One only chance was left me, that of beseeching the magistrate before whom I was taken to cause every inquiry to be made for an individual named the Abbé Busoni, who had stopped at the auberge of the Pont du Gard on the morning previous to the murder. If, indeed, Caderousse had invented the story relative to the diamond, and there existed no such person as the Abbé Busoni, then, indeed, I was lost past redemption, or, at least, my life hung upon the feeble chance of Caderousse himself being apprehended and confessing the whole truth. Two months passed away in hopeless expectation on my part, while I must do the magistrate justice by declaring he used every means to obtain information of the person I declared could exculpate me if he would. Caderousse still evaded all pursuit, and I had resigned myself to what seemed my inevitable fate. My trial was to come on at the approaching sessions ; when, on the 8th of September—that is to say, precisely three months and five days after the events which had perilled my life—the Abbé Busoni, whom I never ventured to believe I should see, presented himself at the prison doors, saying he understood one of the prisoners wished to speak to him ; he added, that having learned the particulars of my imprisonment, he hastened to comply with my desire. You may easily imagine with what eagerness I welcomed him, and how minutely I related the whole of what I had seen and heard. I felt some degree of nervousness as I entered upon the history of the diamond ; but, to my inexpressible astonishment, he confirmed it in every particular, and, to my equal surprise, he seemed to place entire belief in all I stated. And then it was that, won by his mild charity, perceiving him acquainted with all the habits and customs of my own country, and considering also that pardon for the only crime of which I was really guilty might come with a double power from lips so benevolent and kind, I besought him to receive my confession, under the seal of which I recounted the affair of Auteuil, in all its details, as well as every other transaction of my life. That which I had done by the impulse of my best feelings produced the same effect as though it had been the result of calculation. My voluntary confession of the assassination at Auteuil proved to him that I had not committed that with which I stood accused. When he quitted me, he bade me be of good courage, and rely upon his doing all in his power to convince my judges of my innocence.

"I had speedy proofs that the excellent abbé was engaged in my behalf, for the rigours of my imprisonment were alleviated by many trifling though acceptable indulgences ; and I was told that my trial was to be postponed to the assizes following those now being held. In the interim it pleased Providence to cause the apprehension of Caderousse, who was discovered in some distant country, and brought back to France, where he made a full confession, refusing to make the fact of his wife's having suggested and arranged the murder any excuse for his own guilt. The wretched man was sentenced to the galleys for life, and I was immediately set at liberty."

"And then it was, I presume," said Monte-Cristo, "that you came to me as the bearer of a letter from the Abbé Busoni?"—"It was, your

excellency ; the benevolent abbé took an evident interest in all that concerned me.

" 'Your mode of life as a smuggler,' said he to me one day, 'will be the ruin of you if you persist in it ; let me advise you when you get out of prison to choose something more safe as well as respectable.'——'But how,' inquired I, 'am I to maintain myself and my poor sister ?'

" 'A person, whose confessor I am,' replied he, 'and who entertains a high regard for me, applied to me a short time since to procure him a confidential servant. Would you like such a post ? If so, I will give you a letter of introduction to the friend I allude to.'——'With thankfulness shall I profit by your permitting me to wait upon the gentleman you speak of.'

" 'One thing you must do ; swear solemnly that I shall never have reason to repent my recommendation.' I extended my hand, and was about to pledge myself by any promise he would dictate, but he stopped me. 'It is unnecessary for you to bind yourself by any vow,' said he ; 'I know and admire the Corsican nature too well to fear you ! Here, take this,' continued he, after rapidly writing the few lines I brought to your excellency, and upon receipt of which you deigned to receive me into your service, and I venture most respectfully, and humbly, to ask whether your excellency has ever had cause to repent having done so ?'——'On the contrary, Bertuccio, I have ever found you faithful, honest, and deserving. One fault I find with you, and that is, your not having placed sufficient confidence in me.'——'Indeed, your excellency, I know not what you mean !'——'Simply this : how comes it, that having both a sister and an adopted son, you have never spoken to me of either ?'——'Alas ! I have still to recount the most distressing period of my life. Anxious as you may suppose I was to behold and comfort my dear sister, I lost no time in hastening to Corsica, but when I arrived at Regliano, I found a house of

turning to his infamous accomplices, the three united in stifling the cries uttered by the poor victim at the sight of these alarming preparations. This effected, they dragged the unoffending object of their barbarity towards the fire, on which they forcibly held her feet, expecting, by this diabolical expedient, to wring from her where her supposed treasure was secreted. In the struggles made by my poor sister her clothes caught fire, and her fiendish and cowardly tormentors were compelled to let go their hold in order to preserve themselves from sharing the same fate. Covered with flames, Assunta rushed wildly to the door, but it was fastened ; tortured by the agony she endured, the unfortunate sufferer flew to the windows, but they were also strongly barricaded ; then her cries and shrieks of anguish filled the place ; to these succeeded convulsive sobs and deep groans, which, subsiding in faint moans, at length died away, and all was still as the grave. Next morning, as soon as the wife of Wasilio could muster up courage to venture abroad, she caused the door of our dwelling to be opened by the public authorities, when Assunta, although dreadfully burnt, was found still breathing ; every drawer and closet in the house had been forced open, and everything worth carrying off stolen from them. Benedetto never again appeared at Rogliano, neither have I since that day either seen or heard anything concerning him.

"It was subsequently to these dreadful events that I waited on your excellency, to whom it would have been folly to have mentioned Benedetto, since all trace of him seemed entirely lost ; or of my sister, since she was dead."—"And in what light did you view the tragical occurrence?" inquired Monte-Cristo.—"As a punishment for the crime I had committed," answered Bertuccio. "Oh, those Villeforts are an accursed race!"—"Truly they are," murmured the count, with a most singular expression of countenance.

"And now," resumed Bertuccio, "your excellency may, perhaps, be able to comprehend that this place, which I revisit for the first time—this garden, the positive scene of my crime—must have given rise to reflections of no very agreeable nature, and produced that gloom and depression of spirits which excited the notice of your excellency, who was pleased to express a desire to know the cause. At this instant a shudder passes over me as I reflect that possibly I am now standing on the very grave in which lies M. de Villefort, by whose hand the ground was dug to receive the corpse of his child."—"It may be so," said Monte-Cristo, rising from the bench on which he had been sitting ; "but," added he, in a lower tone, "whether the *procureur du roi* be dead or not, the Abbé Busoni did right to send you to me, and you have also acted extremely properly in relating to me the whole of your history, as it will prevent my forming any erroneous opinions concerning you in future. As for that Benedetto, who so grossly belied his name, have you never made any effort to trace out whether he has gone, or what has become of him?"

"No ; far from wishing to learn whither he had betaken himself, I should have shunned the possibility of meeting him as I would a wild beast or a savage monster. Thank God, I have never heard his name mentioned by any person, and I hope and believe he is dead."—"Flatter not yourself that such is the case," replied the count ; "an all-wise Providence permits not sinners to escape thus easily from the punishment they have merited on earth, but reserves them to aid his own designs, using them as instruments whereby to work his vengeance on the guilty."

"I am content to have him live," continued Bertuccio, "so that he spares me the misery of ever again beholding him. And now, M. le Comte,"

added the steward, bending humbly forward, "you know every secret of my life—you are my judge on earth, as the Almighty is in heaven; have you no words of consolation to bestow on a repentant sinner?"—"My good friend, I know of none more calculated to calm your mind than the expressions employed by the Abbé Busoni when speaking of you to me. Villefort, the man you killed, merited the punishment he received at your hands, as a just reward for the wrongs he had done you, and, it may be, for other crimes likewise. Benedetto, if still living, will become the instrument of divine retribution in some way or other, and then be duly punished in his turn. As far as you yourself are concerned, I see but one point in which you are really guilty. Ask yourself, wherefore, after rescuing the infant from its living grave, you did not restore it to its mother? There was the crime, Bertuccio—that was where you became really culpable."

"True, my lord; there, as you say, I acted wickedly, and, moreover, cowardly. My first duty, directly I had succeeded in recalling the babe to life, should have been to have restored it to its mother; but, in order to do so, I must have made close and careful inquiry, which would, in all probability, have led to my own apprehension; and I clung to life, partly on my sister's account, and partly from that feeling of pride inborn in our hearts of desiring to come off untouched and victorious in the execution of our vengeance. Perhaps, too, the natural and instinctive love of life made me wish to avoid endangering my own. And then, again, I was not fortified as brave and courageous as my poor brother." Bertuccio hid his face in his hands as he uttered these words, while Monte-Cristo fixed on him a long and unexpressed gaze. After a brief silence, rendered still more solemn by the time and place, the count said, in a tone of melancholy wholly unlike his usual manner, "In order to bring this conversation to a befitting termination (as I promise you never again to revert to it), I will

arose, and, taking three or four steps onwards, he murmured, "Here, beneath this plane-tree, must have been where the infant's grave was dug. There is the little door opening into the garden. At this corner is the private staircase communicating with the sleeping apartment. There will be no necessity for me to make a note of these particulars, for there, before my eyes, beneath my feet, all around me, I have the plan sketched with all the living reality of truth." After making the tour of the garden a second time, the count regained the house and re-entered his carriage; while Bertuccio, who perceived the thoughtful expression of his master's features, took his seat beside the driver without uttering a word. The carriage proceeded rapidly towards Paris.

That same evening, upon reaching his abode in the Champs Elysées, the Count of Monte-Cristo went over the whole building with the air of one long acquainted with each nook or corner. Nor, although preceding the party, did he once mistake one door for another, or commit the smallest error when choosing any particular corridor or staircase to conduct him to a place or suite of rooms he desired to visit. Ali was his principal attendant during the somewhat late hour of his survey. Having given various orders to Bertuccio relative to the improvements and alterations he desired to make in the house, the count, drawing out his watch, said to the attentive Nubian, "It is half-past eleven o'clock; Haydée will not be long ere she arrives. Have the French attendants been summoned to await her coming?" Ali extended his hands towards the apartments destined for the fair Greek, which were at a distance from the habitable part of the dwelling, and so effectually concealed, by means of a tapestried entrance, that it would have puzzled the most curious to have divined that beyond that spot lay hid a suite of rooms fitted up with a rich magnificence worthy of the lovely being who was to tenant them. Ali, having pointed to the apartments, counted three on the fingers of his right hand, and then, placing it beneath his head, shut his eyes, and feigned to sleep. "I understand," said Monte-Cristo, well acquainted with Ali's pantomime; "you mean to tell me that three female attendants await their new mistress in her sleeping-chamber." Ali, with considerable animation, made a sign in the affirmative.

"The young lady must needs be fatigued with her journey," continued Monte-Cristo, "and will, no doubt, wish to retire to rest immediately upon her arrival. Desire the French attendants not to weary her with questions, but merely to pay their respectful duty and retire. You will also see that the Greek servants hold no communication with those of this country." Ali bowed obediently and reverentially. Just at that moment voices were heard hailing the concierge. The gate opened, a carriage rolled down the avenue, and stopped at the flight of steps leading to the house. The count hastily descended, and presented himself at the already opened carriage-door to assist a young female, completely enveloped in a mantle of green and gold, to alight. The female raised the hand extended towards her to her lips, and kissed it with a mixture of love and respect. Some few words passed between them in that sonorous language in which Homer makes his gods converse. The female spoke with an expression of deep tenderness, while the count replied with an air of gentle gravity. Preceded by Ali, who carried a rose-coloured flambeau in his hand, the female, who was no other than the lovely Greek who had been Monte-Cristo's companion in Italy, was conducted to her apartments, while the count retired to the pavilion reserved for himself. In another hour every light in the house was extinguished, and it might have been thought that all its inmates slept.

CHAPTER XLVI.

UNLIMITED CREDIT.

ABOUT two o'clock the following day a calèche, drawn by a pair of magnificent English horses, stopped at the door of Monte-Cristo, and a person dressed in a blue coat, with buttons of a similar colour, a white waistcoat, over which was displayed a massive gold chain, brown trousers, and a quantity of black hair descending so low over his eyebrows as to leave it doubtful whether it were not artificial, so little did its jetty glossiness assimilate with the deep wrinkles stamped on his features—a person, in a word, who, although evidently past fifty, desired to be taken for not more than forty, bent forwards from the carriage-door, on the panels of which were emblazoned the armorial bearings of a baron, and directed his groom to inquire at the porter's lodge whether the Count of Monte-Cristo resided there, and if he were within. While waiting, the occupant of the carriage surveyed the house, the garden so far as he could distinguish it, and the livery of the servants who passed to and fro, with an attention so close as to be somewhat impertinent. The glance of this individual was keen, but evincing rather cunning than intelligence; his lips were straight, and so thin that, as they closed, they were compressed within the mouth; his cheek-bones were broad and projecting, a never-failing proof of audacity and craftiness; while the flatness of his forehead, and the enlargement of the back of his skull, which rose much higher than his large and vulgarly-shaped ears, combined to form a physiognomy anything but prepossessing, save in the eyes of such as considered that the owner of so splendid an equipage must needs be all that was admirable and enviable, more especially when they gazed on the enormous diamond that glittered in his shirt, and the red riband that depended from his button-hole.

count, in a tone of disgust, as he shut up his glass into its ivory case. "How comes it that all do not retreat in aversion at sight of that flat, receding, serpent-like forehead, round, vulture-shaped head, and sharp-hooked nose, like the beak of a buzzard? Ali!" cried he, striking at the same time on the brazen gong. Ali appeared. "Summon Bertuccio!" said the count. Almost immediately Bertuccio entered the apartment. "Did your excellency desire to see me?" inquired he. "I did," replied the count. "You no doubt observed the horses standing a few minutes since at the door?"—"Certainly, your excellency: I noticed them for their remarkable beauty."

"Then how comes it," said Monte-Cristo, with a frown, "that, when I desired you to purchase for me the finest pair of horses to be found in Paris, you permitted so splendid a couple as those I allude to to be in the possession of any one but myself?" At the look of displeasure, added to the angry tone in which the count spoke, Ali turned pale and held down his head. "It is not your fault, my good Ali," said the count in the Arabic language, and in a tone of such gentleness as none would have given him credit for being capable of feeling—"it is not your fault. You do not profess to understand the choice of English horses." The countenance of poor Ali recovered its serenity. "Permit me to assure your excellency," said Bertuccio, "that the horses you speak of were not to be sold when I purchased yours." Monte-Cristo shrugged up his shoulders. "It seems, M. l'Intendant," said he, "that you have yet to learn that all things are to be sold to such as care to pay the price."

"M. le Comte is not, perhaps, aware that M. Danglars gave 16,000 francs for his horses?"—"Very well! then offer him double that sum: a banker never loses an opportunity of doubling his capital."

"Is your excellency really in earnest?" inquired the steward. Monte-Cristo regarded the person who durst presume to doubt his words with the look of one equally surprised and displeased. "I have to pay a visit this evening," replied he. "I desire that these horses, with completely new harness, may be at the door with my carriage." Bertuccio bowed, and was about to retire; but when he reached the door, he paused, and then said, "At what o'clock does your excellency wish the carriage and horses ready?"—"At five o'clock," replied the count.

"I beg your excellency's pardon," interposed the steward, in a deprecating manner, "for venturing to observe that it is already two o'clock."

"I am perfectly aware of that fact," answered Monte-Cristo calmly. Then, turning towards Ali, he said, "Let all the horses in my stables be led before the windows of your young lady, that she may select those she prefers for her carriage. Request her also to oblige me by saying whether it is her pleasure to dine with me; if so, let dinner be served in her apartments. Now leave me, and desire my valet-de-chambre to come hither." Scarcely had Ali disappeared when the valet entered the chamber. "M. Baptistin," said the count, "you have been in my service one year, the time I generally give myself to judge of the merits or demerits of those about me. You suit me very well." Baptistin bowed low. "It only remains for me to know whether I also suit you?"—"Oh, M. le Comte!" exclaimed Baptistin eagerly.

"Listen, if you please, till I have finished speaking," replied Monte-Cristo. "You receive 1,500 francs per annum for your services here—more than many a brave subaltern, who continually risks his life for his country, obtains. You live in a manner far superior to many clerks and placemen who work ten times harder than you do for their money, and certainly are

quite as faithful in the discharge of their duties as you may be. Then, though yourself a servant, you have other servants to wait upon you, take care of your clothes, and see that your linen is duly prepared for you. Again, you make a profit upon each article you purchase for my toilette, amounting in the course of a year to a sum equalling your wages."—"Nay, indeed, your excellency."

"Do not interrupt me, M. Baptistin, I am not entering into these particulars with a view to complain or reproach you; on the contrary, I see nothing unfair or unreasonable in all I have enumerated; but let your notions of gain end with the advantages you have hitherto possessed. You know, as well as myself, that were I to dismiss you it would be long indeed ere you would find so lucrative a post as that you have now the good fortune to fill. I neither ill-use nor ill-treat my servants by word or action. An error I readily forgive, but a wilful negligence or forgetfulness of my orders I never look over, and for that purpose I always endeavour, when issuing commands, to make them as short as they are clear and precise; and I would rather be obliged to repeat my words twice, or even three times, than they should be misunderstood. I am rich enough to become acquainted with whatever I desire to know, and I can promise you I am not wanting in curiosity. If, then, I should learn that you had taken upon yourself to speak of me to any one favourably or unfavourably, to comment on my actions, or watch my conduct, that very instant you would quit my service. You may now retire. I never caution my servants a second time—remember that. You have been duly admonished, and if the warning is given in vain you will have nobody to blame but yourself." Again Baptistin bowed reverentially, and was proceeding towards the door when the count made him stay. "I forgot to mention to you," said he, "I lay yearly aside a certain sum for each servant in my establishment; those

was wanted one stroke was given, two on the left Baptista, and three Bertuccio. The steward entered. "My horses!" said Monte-Cristo.

"They are at the door harnessed to the carriage as your excellency desired. Does M. le Comte wish me to accompany him?"—"No, the coachman, Ali, and Baptistin will be sufficient without you." The count descended to the door of his mansion, and beheld his carriage drawn by the very pair of horses he had so much admired in the morning as the property of Danglars. As he passed them he said,—*"They are extremely handsome certainly, and you have done well to purchase them, although you were somewhat remiss not to have procured them sooner."*—"Indeed, your excellency, I had very considerable difficulty in obtaining them, and, as it is, they have cost an enormous price."

"Does the sum you gave for them make the animals less beautiful?" inquired the count, shrugging his shoulders.—"Nay, if your excellency is satisfied, all is as I could wish it. Whither does M. le Comte desire to be driven?"

"To the residence of M. le Baron Danglars, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin." This conversation had passed as they stood upon the terrace, from which a flight of stone steps led to the carriage-drive. As Bertuccio, with a respectful bow, was moving away, the count called him back. "I have another commission for you, M. Bertuccio," said he; "I am desirous of having an estate by the seaside in Normandy—for instance, between Havre and Boulogne. You see I give you a wide range. It will be absolutely necessary that the place you may select have a small harbour, creek, or bay, into which my vessel can enter and remain at anchor. She merely draws fifteen feet water. She must be kept in constant readiness to sail immediately I think proper to give the signal. Make the requisite inquiries for a place of this description, and when you have met with an eligible spot, visit it, and if it possess the advantages desired, purchase it at once in your own name. The corvette must now, I think, be on her way to Fécamp, must she not?"

"Certainly, your excellency; I saw her put to sea the same evening we quitted Marseilles."—"And the yacht?"—"Was ordered to remain at Martigues."—"Tis well! I wish you to write from time to time to the captains in charge of the two vessels so as to keep them on the alert."—"And the steam-boat? Has your excellency any orders to give respecting her?"—"She is at Chalons, is she not?"—"She is, my lord."—"The directions I gave you for the other two vessels may suffice for the steam-boat also."—"I understand, my lord, and will punctually fulfil your commands."—"When you have purchased the estate I desire, I mean to establish constant relays of horses at ten leagues' distance one from the other along the northern and southern road."—"Your excellency may fully depend upon my zeal and fidelity in all things." The count gave an approving smile, descended the terrace steps, and sprang into his carriage, which, drawn by the beautiful animals so expensively purchased, was whirled along with incredible swiftness, and stopped only before the hôtel of the banker. Danglars was engaged at that moment, presiding over a railroad committee. But the meeting was nearly concluded when the name of his visitor was announced. As the count's title sounded on his ear he rose, and addressing his colleagues, many of whom were members of either chamber, he said,—*"Gentlemen, I must pray you to excuse my quitting you thus; but a most ridiculous circumstance has occurred, which is this,—Thomson and French, the bankers at Rome, have sent to me a certain individual calling himself the Count of Monte-*

Cristo, who is desirous of opening an account with me to any amount he pleases. I confess this is the drollest thing I have ever met with in the course of my extensive foreign transactions, and you may readily suppose it has greatly roused my curiosity ; indeed, so much did I long to see the bearer of so unprecedented an order for an unlimited credit, that I took the trouble this morning to call on the pretended count, for his title is a mere fiction—of that I am persuaded. We all know counts nowadays are not famous for their riches. But, would you believe, upon arriving at the residence of the *soi-disant* Count of Monte-Cristo, I was very coolly informed, ‘He did not receive visitors that day!’ Upon my word, such airs are ridiculous, and befitting only some great millionaire or a capricious beauty. I made inquiries, and found that the house where the said count resides in the Champs Elysées is his own property, and certainly it was very decently kept up and arranged, as far as I could judge from the gardens and exterior of the hôtel. But,” pursued Danglars, with one of his sinister smiles, “an order for unlimited credit calls for something like caution on the part of the banker to whom that order is given. These facts stated, I will freely confess I am very anxious to see the individual just now announced. I suspect a hoax is intended, but the good folks who thought fit to play it off on me knew but little whom they had to deal with. Well ! well ! we shall see. ‘They laugh best who laugh last !’”

Having delivered himself of this pompous address, uttered with a degree of energy that left the baron almost out of breath, he bowed to the assembled party and withdrew to his drawing-room, whose sumptuous fittings-up of white and gold had caused a great and admiring sensation in the Chaussée d’Antin. It was to this apartment he had desired his guest to be shown, fully reckoning upon the overwhelming effect so dazzling a *coup d’œil* would produce. He found the count standing before some

"You have abdicated your titles after the example set you by Messrs. de Montmorency and Lafayette? Well, you cannot possibly choose more noble models for your conduct."

"Why," replied Danglars, "I do not mean to say I have altogether laid aside my titles; with the servants, for instance—there I think it right to preserve my rank with all its outward forms."—"I see: by your domesticity you are 'my lord,' 'M. le Baron!' the journalists of the day style you 'monsieur!' while your constituents term you 'citizen.'" Again Danglars bit his lips with baffled spite; he saw well enough that he was no match for Monte-Cristo in an argument of this sort, and he therefore hastened to turn to subjects more familiar to him, and calculated on having all the advantages on his side.

"Permit me to inform you, M. le Comte," said he, bowing, "that I have received a letter of advice from Thomson and French, of Rome."

"I am glad to hear it, M. le Baron, for I must claim the privilege of so addressing you as well as your servants; I have acquired the bad habit of calling persons by their style and title from living in a country where barons are still met with, simply because persons are never suddenly elevated to a rank which is possessed only in right of ancestry. But as regards the letter of advice, I am charmed to find it has reached you; that will spare me the troublesome and disagreeable task of coming to you for money myself. You have received a regular letter of advice, therefore my cheques will be duly honoured, and we shall neither of us have to go out of our way in the transaction."

"There is one slight difficulty," said Danglars, "and that consists in my not precisely comprehending the letter itself!"—"Indeed?"

"And for that reason I did myself the honour of calling upon you, in order to beg you would explain some part of it to me."—"With much pleasure! Pray, now I am here, let me know what it was that baffled your powers of comprehension!"

"Why," said Danglars, "in the letter—I believe I have it about me"—here he felt in his breast-pocket—"yes, here it is! Well, this letter gives M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo unlimited credit on our house."

"And what is there that requires explaining in that simple fact, may I ask, M. le Baron?"

"Merely the term *unlimited*—nothing else, certainly."—"Is not that word known in France? Perhaps, indeed, it does not belong to the language, for the persons from whom you received your letter of advice are a species of Anglo-Germans, and very probably do not write very choice or accurate French."

"Oh, as for the composition of the letter, there is not the smallest error in it; but as regards the competency of the document, I certainly have doubts."—"Is it possible?" asked the count, assuming an air and tone of the utmost simplicity and candour. "Is it possible that Thomson and French are not looked upon as safe and solvent bankers? Pray tell me what you think, M. le Baron, for I feel uneasy, I can assure you, having some considerable property in their hands."

"Thomson and French are bankers of the highest repute," replied Danglars, with an almost mocking smile; "and it was not of their solvency or capability I spoke, but of the word *unlimited*, which, in financial affairs, is so extremely vague a term—that—that—"

"In fact," said Monte-Cristo, "that its sense is also without limitation."

"Precisely what I was about to say," cried Danglars. "Now what is

vague is doubtful ; and, says the wise man, 'where there is doubt there is danger !' "

" Meaning to say," rejoined Monte-Cristo, " that however Thomson and French may be inclined to commit acts of imprudence and folly, M. le Baron Danglars is not disposed to follow their example."

" How so, M. le Comte ?"

" Simply thus : the banking-house of Thomson and Co. set no bounds to their engagements, while that of M. Danglars has its limits ; truly he is wise as the sage whose prudent apophthegm he quoted but just now."

" Monsieur !" replied the banker, drawing himself up with a haughty air, " the amount of my capital, or the extent and solvency of my engagements, has never yet been questioned."

" It seems, then, reserved for me," said Monte-Cristo, coldly, " to be the first to do so."—" By what right, sir ?"

" By right of the objections you have raised, and the explanations you have demanded, which certainly imply considerable distrust on your part, either of yourself or me—the former most probably." Again did Danglars, by a forcible effort, restrain himself from betraying the vindictive passions which possessed his mind at this second defeat by an adversary who calmly fought him with his own weapons : his forced politeness sat awkwardly upon him, while his splenetic rage, although essaying to veil itself under a playful, jesting manner, approached at times almost to impertinence. Monte-Cristo, on the contrary, preserved a graceful suavity of demeanour, aided by a certain degree of simplicity he could assume at pleasure, and thus, calm and wholly at his ease, possessed an infinite advantage over his irascible companion.

" Well, sir," resumed Danglars, after a brief silence, " I will endeavour to make myself understood, by requesting you to inform me for what sum you propose to draw upon me?" "What truly?" replied Monte-Cristo.

sent *coup*; its effect on the banker was perfectly stunning; and as though scarcely venturing to credit his senses, he continued gazing from the paper to the count with a confused and mystified air.

"Come, come," said Monte-Cristo, "confess honestly that you have not perfect confidence in the responsibility of the house of Thomson and French—there is nothing very strange in your exercising what seems to you a necessary caution; however, foreseeing that such might be the case, I determined, spite of my ignorance in such matters, to be provided with the means of banishing all scruples from your mind, and at the same time leaving you quite at liberty to act as you pleased in the affair. See, here are two similar letters to that you have yourself received; the one from the house of Arstein and Eskeles, of Vienna, to Baron de Rothschild; the other drawn from Baring, of London, to M. Laffitte. Now, sir, you have but to say the word, and I will spare you all uneasiness and alarm on the subject, by presenting my letter of credit at one or other of the establishments I have named." The blow had struck home, and Danglars was entirely vanquished; with a trembling hand he took the two letters from Vienna and London from the count, who held them carelessly between his finger and thumb, as though to him they were mere every-day matters, to which he attached but very little interest. Having carefully perused the documents in question, the banker proceeded to ascertain the genuineness of the signatures, and this he did with a scrutiny so severe as might have appeared insulting to the count, had it not suited his present purpose to mislead the banker in every respect. "Well, sir," said Danglars, rising, after he had well convinced himself of the authenticity of the documents he held, and bowing, as though in adoration of a man, the thrice happy possessor of as many orders for unlimited credit on the three principal banks of Paris, "you have three signatures worth untold wealth; although your conversation and vouchers put an end to all mistrust in the affair, you must pardon me, M. le Comte, for confessing the most extreme astonishment."

"Nay, nay," answered Monte-Cristo, with the easiest and most gentlemanly air imaginable, "'tis not for such trifling sums as these to startle or astonish the banking-house of M. le Baron Danglars. Then, as all is settled as to forms between us, I will thank you to send a supply of money to me to-morrow."

"By all means, M. le Comte. What sum do you want?"

"Why," replied Monte-Cristo, "since we mutually understand each other—for such I presume is the *case*?" Danglars bowed assentingly. "You are quite sure that not a lurking doubt or suspicion lingers in your mind?"—"Oh, M. le Comte!" exclaimed Danglars, "I never for an instant entertained such a feeling towards you."

"No, no! you merely wished to be convinced you ran no risk, nothing more; but now that we have come to so clear an understanding, and that all distrust and suspicion are laid at rest, we may as well fix a sum as the probable expenditure of the first year:—suppose we say six millions to—"

"Six millions?" gasped out Danglars—"certainly, whatever you please."

"Then, if I should require more," continued Monte-Cristo, in a careless, indifferent manner, "why, of course, I should draw upon you; but my present intention is not to remain in France more than a year, and during that period I scarcely think I shall exceed the sum I mentioned. However, we shall see."

"The money you desire shall be at your house by ten o'clock to-morrow."

morning, M. le Comte," replied Danglars. "How would you like to have it? in gold, silver, or notes?"—"Half in gold, and the other half in bank-notes, if you please," said the count, rising from his seat.

"I must confess to you, M. le Comte," said Danglars, "that I have hitherto imagined myself acquainted with the degree of fortune possessed by all the rich individuals of Europe, and still wealth such as yours has been wholly unknown to me. May I presume to ask whether you have long possessed it?"—"It has been in the family a very long while," returned Monte-Cristo, "a sort of treasure expressly forbidden to be touched for a certain period of years, during which the accumulated interest has doubled the capital. The period appointed by the testator for the disposal of these riches occurred only a short time ago; and they have only been employed by me within the last few years. Your ignorance on the subject, therefore, is easily accounted for. However, you will be better informed as to me and my possessions ere long." And the count, while pronouncing these latter words, accompanied them with one of those ghastly smiles that used to strike terror into poor Franz d'Epinay.

"With your tastes, and means of gratifying them," continued Danglars, "you will exhibit a splendour that must effectually put us poor miserable millionaires quite in the background. If I mistake not, you are an admirer of paintings, at least I judged so from the attention you appeared to be bestowing on mine when I entered the room. If you will permit me, I shall be happy to show you my picture gallery, composed entirely of works by the ancient masters—warranted as such. Not a modern picture among them. I cannot endure the modern school of painting."—"You are perfectly right in objecting to them, for this one great fault—that they have not yet had time to become old."

"Or will you allow me to show you several fine statues by Thorwaldsen,

If by marrying me, for she belongs to one of the most ancient families in France. Her maiden name was De Servières, and her first husband was M. le Colonel Marquis de Nargonne."

"I have not the honour of knowing Madame Danglars; but I have already met M. Lucien Debray."—"Ah! indeed?" said Danglars; and where was that?"—"At the house of M. de Morcerf."—"Oh! what! you are acquainted with the young viscount, are you?"—"We were together a good deal during the Carnival at Rome."—"True, true!" cried Danglars. "Let me see: have I not heard talk of some strange venture with bandits or thieves hid in ruins, and of his having had a raculous escape? I forget how; but I know he used to amuse my wife and daughter by telling them about it after his return from Italy."

"Madame la Baronne is waiting to receive you, gentlemen," said the servant, who had gone to inquire the pleasure of his mistress. "With your permission," said Danglars, bowing, "I will precede you, to show you the way."

"By all means," replied Monte-Cristo; "I follow you."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DAPPLED GREYS.

THE baron, followed by the count, traversed a long suite of apartments, which the prevailing characteristics were heavy magnificence and the odiousness of ostentatious wealth, until he reached the boudoir of Madame Danglars—a small octagonal-shaped room, hung with pink satin, covered with white Indian muslin; the chairs were of ancient workmanship of d materials; over the doors were painted sketches of shepherds and shepherdesses, after the style and manner of Boucher; and at each side pretty medallions in crayons, harmonising well with the fittings-up of this charming apartment, the only one throughout the vast hotel in which any distinctive taste prevailed. The truth was, it had been entirely overlooked in the plan arranged and followed out by M. Danglars and his architect, who had been selected to aid the baron in the great work of improvement he meditated solely because he was the most fashionable and celebrated decorator of the day. The ornamental part of the fittings-up of Madame Danglars' boudoir had then been left entirely to herself and Lucien Debray. M. Danglars, however, while possessing a great admiration for the antique, as it was understood during the time of the Directory, entertained the most sovereign contempt for the simple elegance of his wife's favourite sitting-room, where, by the way, he was never permitted to intrude, unless, indeed, he excused his own appearance by ushering in some more agreeable visitor than himself; and even then he had rather the air and manner of a person who was himself introduced, than as the presenter of another, his reception being either cordial or frigid, in proportion as the individual who accompanied him chanced to please or displease his lady wife.

As Danglars now entered he found Madame la Baronne (who, although it was the first bloom of youth, was still strikingly handsome) seated at the table, a most elaborate piece of cabinet and inlaid work, while Lucien Debray, standing before a small work-table, was turning over the pages of an album. Lucien had found time, preparatory to the count's arrival, to state many particulars respecting him to Madame Danglars. It will be remembered that Monte-Cristo had made a lively impression on the minds

offered me this morning for them. Some madman or fool, bent upon ruining himself as fast as he can, actually sent his steward to me to purchase them at any cost ; and the fact is, I have gained 16,000 francs by the sale of them. Come, don't look so angry, and you shall have 4,000 francs of the money to do what you like with, and Eugénie shall have 2,000. There, what do you think now of the affair? Wasn't I right to part with the horses?" Madame Danglars surveyed her husband with a look of withering contempt.

"What do I see?" suddenly exclaimed Debray.

"Where?" asked the baroness.

"I cannot be mistaken ; there are your horses ! The very animals we were speaking of, harnessed to the count's carriage !"—"My dear, beautiful dappled greys?" demanded the baroness, springing to the window. "'Tis indeed they !" said she. Danglars looked absolutely stultified. "How very singular!" cried Monte-Cristo, with well-feigned astonishment. Madame Danglars whispered a few words in the ear of Debray, who approached Monte-Cristo, saying, "The baroness wishes to know what you paid her husband for the horses."

"I scarcely know," replied the count ; "it was a little surprise prepared for me by my steward ; he knew how desirous I was of meeting with precisely such a pair of horses—and—so he bought them. I think, if I remember rightly, he hinted that he had given somewhere about 30,000 francs." Debray conveyed the count's reply to the baroness. Poor Danglars looked so crestfallen and discomfited that Monte-Cristo assumed a pitying air towards him. "See," said the count, "how very ungrateful women are ! Your kind attention, in providing for the safety of the baroness by disposing of the horses, does not seem to have made the least impression on her. But so it is ; a woman will often, from mere wilfulness,

favourite "dappled greys," protesting that he could not endure the idea of making his *début* in the Parisian world of fashion with the knowledge that his splendid equipage had been obtained at the price of a lovely woman's regrets. The horses were sent back wearing the same harness they had done in the morning; the only difference consisted in the rosettes worn on the heads of the animals being adorned with a large diamond placed in the centre of each, by order of the count.

To Danglars Monte Cristo also wrote, requesting him to excuse the whimsical gift of a capricious millionaire, and to beg of Madame la Baronne to pardon the Eastern fashion adopted in the return of the horses.

During the evening, Monte-Cristo quitted Paris for Auteuil, accompanied by Ali. The following day, about three o'clock, a single blow struck on the gong summoned Ali to the presence of the count. "Ali," observed his master, as the Nubian entered the chamber, "you have frequently explained to me how more than commonly skilful you are in throwing the lasso, have you not?" Ali drew himself up proudly, and then returned a sign in the affirmative. "I thought I did not mistake. With your lasso you could stop an ox?" Again Ali repeated his affirmative gesture. "Or a tiger?" Ali bowed his head in token of assent. "A lion even?" Ali sprung forwards, imitating the action of one throwing the lasso; then of a strangled lion.

"I understand," said Monte-Cristo; "you wish to tell me you have hunted the lion?" Ali smiled with triumphant pride as he signified that he had indeed both chased and captured many lions. "But do you believe you could arrest the progress of two horses rushing forwards with ungovernable fury?" The Nubian smiled. "It is well," said Monte-Cristo. "Then listen to me. Ere long a carriage will dash past here, drawn by the pair of dappled grey horses you saw me with yesterday; now, at the risk of your own life, you must manage to stop those horses before my door."

Ali descended to the street, and marked a straight line on the pavement immediately at the entrance of the house, and then pointed out the line he had traced to the count, who was watching him. The count patted him gently on the back, his usual mode of praising Ali, who, pleased and gratified with the commission assigned him, walked calmly towards a projecting stone forming the angle of the street and house, and, seating himself thereon, began to smoke his chibouque, while Monte-Cristo re-entered his dwelling, perfectly assured of the success of his plan. Still, as five o'clock approached, and the carriage was momentarily expected by the count, the indication of more than common impatience and uneasiness might be observed in his manner. He stationed himself in a room commanding a view of the street, pacing the chamber with restless steps, stopping merely to listen from time to time for the sound of approaching wheels, then to cast an anxious glance on Ali; but the regularity with which the Nubian puffed forth the smoke of his chibouque proved that he at least was wholly absorbed in the enjoyment of his favourite occupation. Suddenly a distant sound of rapidly-advancing wheels was heard, and almost immediately a carriage appeared, drawn by a pair of wild, ungovernable horses, who rushed forward as though urged by the fiend himself, while the terrified coachman strove in vain to restrain their furious speed.

In the vehicle was a female, apparently young, and a child of about seven or eight years of age. Terror seemed to have deprived them even of the power of uttering a cry, and both were clasped in each other's arms,

as though determined not to be parted by death itself. The carriage creaked and rattled as it flew over the rough stones, and had it encountered the slightest impediment to its progress, it must inevitably have upset ; but it still flew on, and the cries of the affrighted spectators testified the universal sense of the imminent peril its occupants were threatened with.

Then Ali knew the right moment was come, and, throwing down his chibouque, he drew the lasso from his pocket, threw it so skilfully as to catch the forelegs of the near horse in its triple fold, suffered himself to be dragged on for a few steps, by which time the tightening of the well-cast lasso had so completely hampered the furious animal as to bring it to the ground, and falling on the pole, it snapped, and therefore prevented the other animal from pursuing its headlong way. Gladly availing himself of this opportunity, the coachman leaped from his box ; but Ali had promptly seized the nostrils of the second horse, and held them in his iron grasp, till the maddened beast, snorting with pain, sunk beside his companion. All this was achieved in much less time than is occupied in the recital. The brief space had, however, been sufficient for an individual, followed by a number of servants, to rush from the house before which the accident had occurred, and, as the coachman opened the door of the carriage, to take from it a lady who was convulsively grasping the cushions with one hand, while with the other she pressed to her bosom her young companion, who had lost all consciousness of what was passing.

Monte-Cristo carried them both to the salon, and deposited them on a sofa. "Compose yourself, madam," said he ; "all danger is over." The female looked up at these words, and, with a glance far more expressive than any entreaties could have been, pointed to her child, who still continued insensible. "I understand the nature of your alarms, madam," said the count, carefully examining the child, "but I assure you there is not

well-feigned astonishment, "that these horses belong to Madame la Baronne?"

"They do, indeed. May I inquire if you are acquainted with Madame Danglars?"

"I have that honour; and my happiness at your escape from the danger that threatened you is redoubled by the consciousness that I have been the unwilling and unintentional cause of all the peril you have incurred. I yesterday purchased these horses of the baron; but as the baroness evidently regretted parting with them, I ventured to send them back to her, with a request that she would gratify me by accepting them from my hands."

"You are, then, doubtless, the Count of Monte-Cristo, of whom Hermine has talked to me so much?"

"You have rightly guessed, madam," replied the count.

"And I am Madame Héloïse de Villefort." The count bowed with the air of a person who hears a name for the first time. "How grateful will M. de Villefort be for all your goodness; how thankfully will he acknowledge that to you alone it is owing that his wife and child exist! Most certainly, but for the prompt assistance of your intrepid servant, this dear child and myself must both have perished."—"Indeed, I still shudder at the recollection of the fearful danger you were placed in, as well as your interesting child."

"I trust you will not object to my offering a recompense to your noble-hearted servant, proportionate to the service he has rendered me and mine."

"I beseech you, madam," replied Monte-Cristo, "not to spoil Ali, either by too great praise or rewards. I cannot allow him to acquire the habit of expecting to be recompensed for every trifling service he may render. Ali is my slave, and in saving your life he was but discharging his duty to me."

"Nay," interposed Madame de Villefort, on whom the authoritative style adopted by the count made a deep impression, "nay, but consider that to preserve my life he has risked his own."

"His life, madam, belongs not to him; it is mine, in return for my having myself saved him from death." Madame de Villefort made no further reply: her mind was utterly absorbed in the contemplation of the singular individual, who, from the first instant of her beholding him, had made so powerful an impression on her. During the evident preoccupation of Madame de Villefort, Monte-Cristo scrutinised the features and appearance of the boy she kept folded in her arms, lavishing on him the most tender endearments. The child was small for his age, and unnaturally pale. A mass of straight black hair, defying all attempts to train or curl it, fell over his projecting forehead, and hung down to his shoulders, giving increased vivacity to eyes already sparkling with a youthful love of mischief and fondness for every forbidden enjoyment. His mouth was large, and the lips, which had not yet regained their colour, were particularly thin; in fact, the deep and crafty look, forming the principal character of the child's face, belonged rather to a boy of twelve or fourteen years of age than to one so young. His first movement was to free himself by a violent push from the encircling arms of his mother, and to rush forward to the casket from whence the count had taken the phial of elixir, then, without asking permission of any one, he proceeded, in all the wilfulness of a spoiled child unaccustomed to restrain either whims or caprices, to pull the corks out of all the bottles in the casket.

"Touch nothing, my little friend," cried the count, eagerly; "some of those liquids are not only dangerous to taste, but even to smell."

Madame de Villefort became very pale, and, seizing her son's arm, drew him anxiously towards her; but, once satisfied of his safety, she also cast a brief but expressive glance on the casket, which was not lost upon the count. At this moment Ali entered. At sight of him Madame de Villefort uttered an expression of pleasure, and, holding the child still closer towards her, she said, "Edward, dearest, do you see that good man? He has shown very great courage and resolution, for he exposed his own life to stop the horses that were running away with us, and would certainly have dashed the carriage to pieces ere long. Thank him, then, my child, in your very best manner: for, had he not come to our aid, neither you nor I would have been alive to speak our thanks." This address, however, excited no similar feeling of gratitude on the part of the child, who, instead of obeying his mother's directions, stuck out his lips and turned away his head in a disdainful and contemptuous manner, saying, "I don't like him; he's too ugly for me!"

The count witnessed all this with internal satisfaction, and a smile stole over his features as he thought that such a child bade fair to realise one part of his hopes; while Madame de Villefort reprimanded her son with a gentleness and moderation very far from conveying the least idea of a fault having been committed. "This lady," said the count, speaking to Ali in the Arabic language, "is desirous that her son should thank you for saving both their lives: but the boy refuses, saying you are too ugly!" Ali turned his intelligent countenance towards the boy, on whom he gazed without any apparent emotion; but the sort of spasmodic working of the nostrils showed to the practised eye of Monte-Cristo how deeply the Arab was wounded by the unfeeling remark.

able spirit and maddened velocity of the same horses, he was actually compelled to apply his whip in no very gentle manner ere he could induce them to start; and even then all that could be obtained from the celebrated "dappled greys," now changed into a couple of as dull, sluggish, stupid brutes as "the most timid driver" would desire to meet with, was a slow, pottering pace, kept up with so much difficulty that Madame de Villefort was more than a couple of hours returning to her residence in the Faubourg St. Honoré.

Scarcely had the first congratulations upon her marvellous escape been gone through, than she retired to her room, ostensibly for the purpose of seeking a little repose, but in reality to write the following letter to Madame Danglars:—

"DEAR HERMINE,—I have just had a wonderful escape from the most imminent danger, and I owe my safety to the very Count of Monte-Cristo we were talking about yesterday, but whom I little expected to see to-day. I remember how unmercifully I laughed at what I considered your eulogistic and exaggerated praises of him; but I have now ample cause to admit that your enthusiastic description of this wonderful man fell far short of his merits. But I must endeavour to render the account of my adventures somewhat more intelligible. You must know then, my dear friend, that when I had proceeded with your horses as far as Ranelagh, they darted forward like mad things, and galloped away at so fearful a rate, that there seemed no other prospect for myself and my poor Edward but that of being dashed to pieces against the first object that impeded their progress, when a strange-looking man, an Arab or a Nubian, at least a black of some nation or other, at a signal from the count, whose domestic he is, suddenly seized and stopped the infuriated animals, even at the risk of being trampled to death himself; and certainly he must have had a most wonderful escape. The count then hastened to us, and carried myself and son into his house, where, by some skilful application, he speedily recalled my poor Edward (who was quite insensible from terror) to life. When we were sufficiently recovered, he sent us home in his own carriage. Yours will be returned to you to-morrow. I am fearful you will not be able to use your horses for some days; they seem thoroughly stupefied, as if sulky and vexed at having allowed this black servant to conquer them after all. The count, however, has commissioned me to assure you that two or three days' rest, with plenty of barley for their sole food during that time, will bring them back to their former fine condition, which means, I suppose, that they will be ready to run off with the carriage again, and play their wild pranks with as much headstrong fury as they evinced yesterday; do not let them endanger your life, dear Hermine, as they did mine; for Providence may not send a Monte-Cristo, or his Nubian servant, to preserve you from destruction, as it did me. Adieu! I cannot return you many thanks for the drive of yesterday; but, after all, I ought not to blame you for the misconduct of your horses, more especially as it procured me the pleasure of an introduction to the count of Monte-Cristo,—and certainly that illustrious individual, apart from the millions he is said to be so very anxious to dispose of, seemed to me one of those curiously interesting problems I, for one, delight in solving at any risk or danger. Nay, so bent am I on following up my acquaintance with this remarkable personage, that if all other means fail, I really believe I shall have to borrow your horses again, and make another excursion to the Bois de Boulogne. My sweet Edward supported the accident with admir-

able courage—he did not utter a single cry, but fell lifeless into my arms; nor did a tear fall from his eyes after it was over. I doubt not you will consider these praises the result of blind maternal affection; but the delicate, fragile form of my beloved child contains a mind of no ordinary strength, with the heroic firmness of a Spartan boy. Valentine sends many affectionate remembrances to your dear Eugénie—and with best love to her and yourself, I remain,

“Ever yours, truly,

“HELOÏSE DE VILLEFORT.

“P.S.—Do pray contrive some means for my meeting the count of Monte-Cristo at your house. I must and will see him again. I have just made M. de Villefort promise to call on him, in order to acknowledge the signal service he has rendered our family in preserving our child, if my unworthy self goes for nothing, and I flatter myself my husband’s visit will be returned by the count.”

Nothing was talked of throughout the evening but the adventure at Auteuil. Albert related it to his mother, Château-Renaud recounted it at the Jockey Club, and Debray detailed it at length in the salons of the minister; even Beauchamp accorded twenty lines in his journal to the relation of the count’s courage and gallantry, thereby placing him as the greatest hero of the day before the eyes of all the fair members of the aristocracy of France. Vast was the crowd of visitors and inquiring friends who left their names at the hôtel of Madame de Villefort, with the design of renewing their visit at the right moment, of hearing from her lips all the interesting circumstances of this most romantic adventure. As Héloïse had stated, M. de Villefort donned his best black suit, drew on a pair of new white kid gloves, ordered the servants to attend the carriage

things, that not only was he always carefully considered, but sometimes consulted. Perhaps this would not have been so had it been possible to get rid of M. de Villefort ; but, like the feudal barons who rebelled against their sovereign, he dwelt in an impregnable fortress. This fortress was his post as *procureur du roi*, all the advantages of which he worked out marvellously, and which he would not have resigned, but to be made deputy, and thus have converted neutrality into opposition. Ordinarily M. de Villefort made and returned very few visits. His wife visited for him, and this was the received thing in the world, where they assigned to the heavy and multifarious occupations of the magistrate what was really only a calculation of pride, an off-shoot of aristocracy—in fact, the application of the axiom, "*Pretend to think well of yourself, and the world will think well of you*," an axiom a hundred times more useful in our society than that of the Greeks, "*Know thyself*," a knowledge for which, in our days, we have substituted the less difficult and more advantageous science of *knowing others*.

For his friends M. de Villefort was a powerful protector ; for his enemies, he was a silent, but bitter enemy ; for those who were neither the one nor the other, he was a statue of the law made man. Haughty air, immovable countenance, look steady and impenetrable, or else insultingly piercing and inquiring, such was the man for whom four revolutions, skillfully piled one on the other, had first constructed and afterwards cemented the pedestal on which his fortune was elevated. M. de Villefort had the reputation of being the least curious and the least wearisome man in France. He gave a ball every year, at which he appeared for a quarter of an hour only,—that is to say, five-and-forty minutes less than the king is visible at his balls. He was never seen at the theatres, at concerts, or in any place of public resort. Occasionally, but seldom, he played at whist, and then care was taken to select partners worthy of him—sometimes they were ambassadors, sometimes archbishops, or sometimes a prince, or a president, or some dowager duchess. Such was the man whose carriage had just now stopped before the Count of Monte-Cristo's door. The valet-de-chambre announces M. de Villefort at the moment when the count, leaning over a large table, was tracing on a map the route from St. Petersburg to China.

The *procureur du roi* entered with the same grave and measured step he would have employed in entering a court of justice. He was the same man, or rather the completion of the same man, whom we have heretofore seen as *substitut* at Marseilles. Nature, following up its principles, had changed nothing for him in the course he had chalked out for himself. From slender he had become meagre ; from pale, yellow ; his deep-set eyes were now hollow, and gold spectacles, as they shielded his eyes, seemed to make a portion of his face. All his costume was black, with the exception of his white cravat, and this funeral appearance was only broken in upon by the slight line of red riband which passed almost imperceptibly through his button-hole, and which appeared like a streak of blood traced with a pencil. Although master of himself, Monte-Cristo scrutinised with irrepressible curiosity the magistrate, whose salute he returned, and who, distrustful by habit, and especially incredulous as to social marvels, was much more disposed to see in the noble stranger, as Monte-Cristo was already called, a *chevalier d'industrie*, who had come to try new ground, or some malefactor who had broken his prescribed limits, than a prince of the Holy See, or a sultan of the Arabian Nights.

"Sir," said Villefort, in the tone assumed by magistrates in their orato-

rical periods, and of which they cannot, or will not, divest themselves in society,—“sir, the signal service which you yesterday rendered to my wife and son has made it a duty in me to offer you my thanks. Allow me, therefore, to discharge this duty, and to express to you all my gratitude.” And as he said this, the “eye severe” of the magistrate had lost nothing of its habitual arrogance. These words he articulated in the voice of a *procureur-général*, with the rigid inflexibility of neck and shoulders which caused his flatterers to say (as we have said before) that he was the living statue of the law.

“Monsieur,” replied the count, with a chilling air, “I am very happy to have been the means of preserving a son to his mother, for they say that the sentiment of maternity is the most holy of all; and the good fortune which occurred to me, monsieur, might have enabled you to dispense with a duty which, in its discharge, confers an undoubtedly great honour; for I am aware that M. de Villefort is not lavish of the favour he bestows on me, but which, however estimable, is unequal to the satisfaction which I internally experience.” Villefort, astonished at this reply, which he by no means expected, started like a soldier who feels the blow levelled at him over the armour he wears, and a curl of his disdainful lip indicated that from that moment he noted in the tablets of his brain that the Count of Monte-Cristo was by no means a highly-bred gentleman. He glanced around, in order to seize on something on which the conversation might turn, and seemed to fall easily. He saw the map which Monte-Cristo had been examining when he entered, and said,—“You seem geographically engaged, sir? It is a rich study for you, who, as I learn, have seen as many lands as are delineated on this map.”—“Yes, sir,” replied the count; “I have sought to make on the human race, taken as a mass, what you practise every day on individuals—a physiological study. I have believed it was

you say yourself that a portion of your life has been spent in Oriental countries : thus, then, you are not aware how human justice, so expeditious in barbarous countries, takes with us a prudent and well-studied course."—"Oh, yes—yes, I do, sir, it is the *pæde claudo* of the ancients. I know all that, for it is with the justice of all countries especially that I have occupied myself—it is with the criminal procedure of all nations that I have compared natural justice, and I must say, sir, that it is the law of primitive nations, that is, the law of retaliation, that I have most frequently found to be according to the law of God."

"If this law were adopted, sir," said the *procureur du roi*, "it would greatly simplify our legal codes, and in that case the magistrates would not (as you have just observed) have much to do."—"It may, perhaps, come to this in time," observed Monte-Cristo ; "you know that human inventions march from the complex to the simple, and simplicity is always perfection."

"In the meanwhile," continued the magistrate, "our codes are in full force with all their contradictory enactments derived from Gallic customs, Roman laws, and Frank usages ; the knowledge of all which, you will agree, is not to be acquired without lengthened labour, and it requires a tedious study to acquire this knowledge, and when that is acquired, a strong power of brain is necessary in order to retain it."—"I agree with you entirely, sir ; but all that even you know with respect to the French code, I know, not only in reference to that code, but as regards the codes of all nations—the English, Turkish, Japanese, Hindoo laws, are as familiar to me as the French laws, and thus I was right, when I said to you, that relatively (you know that everything is relative, sir)—that relatively to what I have done, you have very little to do ; but that relatively to all I have learned, you have yet a great deal to learn."

"But with what motive have you learned all this ?" inquired Villefort, astonished. Monte-Cristo smiled. "Really, sir," he observed, "I see that in spite of the reputation which you have acquired as a superior man, you contemplate everything in the material and vulgar view of society, beginning with man, and ending with man—that is to say, in the most restricted, most narrow view which it is possible for human understanding to embrace."—"Pray, sir, explain yourself," said Villefort, more and more astonished, "I really do—not—understand you—perfectly."

"I say, sir, that with the eyes fixed on the social organization of nations, you see only the springs of the machine, and lose sight of the sublime workman who makes them act ; I say that you do not recognize before you and around you any but those placemen whose brevets have been signed by the minister or the king ; and that the men whom God has put above those titulars, ministers, and kings, by giving them a mission to follow out, instead of a post to fill—I say that they escape your narrow, limited ken. It is thus that human weakness fails, from its debilitated and imperfect organs. Tobias took the angel who restored him to light for an ordinary young man. The nations took Attila, who was doomed to destroy them, for a conqueror merely similar to other conquerors, and it was necessary for both to reveal their missions, that they might be known and acknowledged ; one was compelled to say, 'I am the angel of the Lord ;' and the other, 'I am the hammer of God,' in order that the Divine essence in both might be revealed."—"Then," said Villefort, more and more amazed, and really supposing he was speaking to a mystic or a madman, "you consider yourself as one of those extraordinary beings whom you have mentioned ?"

"And why not?" said Monte-Cristo, coldly.

"Your pardon, sir," replied Villefort, quite astounded, "but you will excuse me if, when I presented myself to you, I was unaware that I should meet with a person whose knowledge and understanding so far surpass the usual knowledge and understanding of men. It is not usual with us, corrupted wretches of civilisation, to find gentlemen like yourself, possessors, as you are, of immense fortune—at least, so it is said—and I beg you to observe that I do not flatter. I merely repeat:—it is not usual, I say, for such privileged and wealthy beings to waste their time in speculations on the state of society, in philosophical reveries, intended at best to console those whom fate has banished from the goals of this world."

"Really, sir," retorted the count, "have you attained the eminent situation in which you are, without having admitted, or even without having met with exceptions? and do you never use your eyes, which must have acquired so much keenness and acuity, to divine, at a glance, the kind of man who has come before you? Should not a magistrate be not merely the best administrator of the law, but the most crafty expounder of the chicanery of his profession, a steel probe to search hearts, a touch-stone to try the gold which in each soul is mingled with more or less of alloy?"

"Sir," said Villefort, "upon my word, you overcome me. I really never heard a person speak as you do."

"Because you remain eternally encircled in a round of general conditions, and have never dared to raise your wing into those upper spheres which God has peopled with invisible or marked beings."—"And you allow then, sir, that spheres exist, and that these marked and invisible beings mingle amongst us?"

"Why should they not? Can you see the air you breathe, and yet without which you could not for a moment exist?"

This alone can stop me in my onward career, and before I have attained the goal at which I aim, for all the rest I have calculated. What men call the chances of fate—namely, ruin, change, circumstances—I have anticipated them all; and if any of these should overtake me, yet they will not overwhelm me. Unless I die, I shall always be what I am, and therefore it is that I utter the things you have never heard, even from the mouths of kings—for kings have need, and other persons have fear of you. For who is there who does not say to himself, in society as incongruously organized as ours, ‘Perhaps some day I shall have to do with the *procureur du roi*?’”

“But can you not say that, sir? For the moment you become an inhabitant of France, you are naturally subjected to the French law.”——“I know it, sir,” replied Monte-Cristo; “but when I visit a country I begin to study, by all the means which are available, the men from whom I may have anything to hope or to fear, until I know them as well, perhaps better, than they know themselves. It follows from this, that the *procureur du roi*, be he who he may, with whom I should have to deal, would assuredly be more embarrassed than I should.”

“That is to say,” replied Villefort, with hesitation, “that human nature being weak, every man, according to your creed, has committed faults.”——“Faults or crimes,” responded Monte-Cristo, with a negligent air.

“And that you alone, amongst the men whom you do not recognize as your brothers—for you have said so,” observed Villefort, in a tone that faltered somewhat—“you alone are perfect.”

“No, not perfect,” was the count’s reply; “only impenetrable, that’s all. But let us leave off this strain, sir, if the tone of it is displeasing to you; I am no more disturbed by your justice than are you by my second-sight.”

“No! no!—by no means,” said Villefort, who was afraid of seeming to abandon his ground. “No; by your brilliant and almost sublime conversation you have elevated me above the ordinary level; we no longer talk, we rise to dissertation. But you know how the theologians in their collegiate chairs, and philosophers in their controversies, occasionally say cruel truths; let us suppose for the moment that we are theologizing in a social way, or even philosophically, and I will say to you, rude as it may seem, ‘My brother, you sacrifice greatly to pride; you may be above others, but above you there is God.’”

“Above us all, sir,” was Monte-Cristo’s response, in a tone and with an emphasis so deep, that Villefort involuntarily shuddered. “I have my pride for men—serpents always ready to erect themselves against every one who may pass without crushing them. But I lay aside that pride before God, who has taken me from nothing to make me what I am.”

“Then, *M. le Comte*, I admire you,” said Villefort, who, for the first time in this strange conversation, used the aristocratical form to the unknown personage, whom, until now, he had only called *monsieur*. “Yes, and I say to you, if you are really strong, really superior, really pious, or impenetrable, which you were right in saying amounts to the same thing—yet be proud, sir, that is the characteristic of predominance—yet you have unquestionably some ambition.”

“I have, sir.”——“And what may it be?”

“I too, as happens to every man once in his life, have been taken by Satan into the highest mountain in the earth, and when there he showed me all the kingdoms of the earth, and as he said before, so said he to me, ‘Child of earth, what wouldst thou have to make thee adore me?’ I re-

flected long, for a gnawing ambition had long preyed upon me, and then I replied, 'Listen,—I have always heard tell of Providence, and yet I have never seen Him, nor anything that resembles Him, or which can make me believe that He exists. I wish to be Providence myself, for I feel that the most beautiful, noblest, most sublime thing in the world, is to recompense and punish.' Satan bowed his head, and groaned. 'You mistake,' he said; 'Providence does exist, only you have never seen Him, because the child of God is as invisible as the parent. You have seen nothing that resembles Him, because He works by secret springs, and moves by hidden ways. All I can do for you is to make you one of the agents of that Providence.' The bargain was concluded. I may sacrifice my soul, but what matters it?" added Monte-Cristo. "If the thing were to do again, I would again do it." Villefort looked at Monte-Cristo with extreme amazement. "Monsieur le Comte," he inquired, "have you any relations?"—"No, sir, I am alone in the world."

"So much the worse."—"Why?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Because then you might witness a spectacle calculated to break down your pride. You say you fear nothing but death?"

"I did not say that I feared it; I only said that that alone could check me."—"And old age."

"My end will be achieved before I grow old."—"And madness."

"I have been nearly mad; and you know the axiom—*non bis in idem*. It is an axiom of criminal law, and, consequently, you understand its full application."—"Sir," continued Villefort, "there is something to fear besides death, old age, and madness. For instance, there is apoplexy—that lightning-stroke which strikes but does not destroy you, and yet after which all is ended. You are still yourself as now, and yet you are yourself no longer; you who, like Ariel, touch on the angelic, are but an inert

yet, like Providence, it has remained invisible to my eyes, although present to my heart. A hundred writers since Socrates, Seneca, St. Augustin, and Gall, have made, in verse and prose, the comparison you have made, and yet I can well understand that a father's sufferings may effect great changes in the mind of a son. I will call on you, sir, since you bid me contemplate, for the advantage of my pride, this terrible spectacle, which must spread so much sorrow throughout your house."—"It would have done so unquestionably, had not God given me so large a compensation. In presence of the old man, who is dragging his way to the tomb, are two children just entering into life—Valentine, the daughter by my first wife, Mademoiselle Renée de Saint-Méran, and Edward, the boy whose life you have this day saved."

"And what is your deduction from this compensation, sir?" inquired Monte-Cristo.—"My deduction is," replied Villefort, "that my father, led away by his passions, has committed some fault unknown to human justice, but marked by the justice of God. That God, desirous in His mercy to punish but one person, has visited this justice on him alone." Monte-Cristo, with a smile on his lips, had yet a groan at his heart, which would have made Villefort fly had he but heard it. "Adieu, sir," said the magistrate, who had risen from his seat; "I leave you, bearing a remembrance of you—a remembrance of esteem, which I hope will not be disagreeable to you when you know me better; for I am not a man to bore my friends, as you will learn. Besides, you have made an eternal friend of Madame de Villefort." The count bowed, and contented himself with seeing Villefort to the door of his cabinet, the procureur being escorted to his carriage by two footmen, who, on a signal from their master, followed him with every mark of attention. When he had gone, Monte-Cristo drew a hard breath from his oppressed bosom, and said,—"Enough of this poison, let me now seek the antidote." Then sounding his bell, he said to Ali, who entered, "I am going to madam's chamber—have the carriage ready at one o'clock."

CHAPTER XLIX.

HAYDÉE.

It will be recollected that the new, or rather old, acquaintances of the count of Monte-Cristo, residing in the Rue Meslay, were no other than Maximilian, Julie, and Emmanuel. The very anticipations of delight to be enjoyed in his forthcoming visits—the bright, pure gleam of heavenly happiness it diffused over the almost deadly warfare in which he had voluntarily engaged, illumined his whole countenance with a look of ineffable joy and calmness, as, immediately after the departure of Villefort, his thoughts flew back to the cheering prospect before him, of tasting, at least, a brief respite from the fierce and stormy passions of his mind. Even Ali, who had hastened to obey the count's summons, went forth from his master's presence in charmed amazement at the unusual animation and pleasure depicted on features ordinarily so stern and cold; while, as though dreading to put to flight the agreeable ideas hovering over his patron's meditations, whatever they were, the faithful Nubian walked on tiptoe towards the door, holding his breath, lest its faintest sound should dissipate his master's happy reverie.

It was the hour of noon, and Monte-Cristo had set apart one hour to be passed in the apartments of Haydée; as though his so-long-crushed spirit could not all at once admit the feeling of pure and unmixed joy, but re-

the past ; nor upon any occasion be induced to pronounce the names of your illustrious father or ill-fated mother !"—" I have already told my lord it is not my intention to hold converse with any one save himself."

" It is possible, Haydée, that so perfect a seclusion, though conformable with the habits and customs of the East, may not be practicable in Paris. Endeavour, then, to accustom yourself to our manner of living in these northern climes, as you did to those of Rome, Florence, Milan, and Madrid ; it may be useful to you one of these days, whether you remain here or return to the East." The fair girl raised her tearful eyes towards Monte-Cristo, as she said with touching earnestness, " My lord would mean whether *we* return to the East or continue here, would he not ?"

" My child," returned Monte-Cristo, " you know full well, that whenever we part, it will be by no fault or wish of mine : the tree forsakes not the blossom that embellishes it—it is the flower that falls from the tree on which it grew."

" My lord," replied Haydée, " never will I quit you, for sure I am I could not exist if banished your presence ; alas ! what would life be worth then ?"—" My poor girl, you forget that ten years will effect an essentially different change in both of us ; to you that space of time will bring but the perfection of womanly graces, while it will wrinkle my brows and change my hair to grey."

" My father had numbered sixty years, and the snows of age were on his head, but I admired and loved him far better than all the gay, handsome youths I saw about his court."—" Then tell me, Haydée, do you believe you shall be able to accustom yourself to our present mode of life ?"

" Shall I see you ?"—" Every day."

" Then what does my lord apprehend for me ?"

CHAPTER L.

THE MORREL FAMILY.

IN a very few minutes the count reached No. 7 in the Rue Meslay. The house was of white stone, and in a small court before it were two small beds full of beautiful flowers. In the concierge that opened the gate the count recognised Coclès; but as he had but one eye, and that eye had considerably weakened in the course of nine years, Coclès did not so readily recognise the count. The carriages that drove up to the door were compelled to turn, to avoid a fountain that played in a basin of rockwork, in which sported a quantity of gold and silver fishes, an ornament that had excited the jealousy of the whole quarter, and had gained for the house the appellation of "*le Petit Versailles*." The house, raised above the kitchens and cellars, had, besides the ground-floor, two stories and attics. The whole of the property, consisting of an immense workshop, two pavilions at the bottom of the garden, and the garden itself, had been purchased by Emmanuel, who had seen at a glance that he could make a profitable speculation of it. He had reserved the house and half the garden, and building a wall between the garden and the workshops, had let them upon lease with the pavilions at the bottom of the garden. So that for a trifling sum he was as well lodged, and as perfectly shut out from observation, as the inhabitants of the finest hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain. The breakfast-room was of oak; the salon of mahogany and blue velvet; the bedroom of citronwood and green damask: there was a study for Emmanuel, who never studied, and a music-room for Julie, who never played. The whole of the second story was set apart for Maximilian; it was precisely the same as his sister's apartments, except that the breakfast-parlour was changed into a billiard-room, where he received his friends. He was superintending the dressing his horse, and smoking his cigar at the entrance of the garden, when the count's carriage stopped at the door.

Coclès opened the gate, and Baptistin, springing from the box, inquired whether Monsieur and Madame Herbault and Monsieur Maximilian Morrel would see M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo. "M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo?" cried Morrel, throwing away his cigar and hastening to the carriage; "I should think we would see him. Ah! a thousand thanks, M. le Comte, for not having forgotten your promise." And the young officer shook the count's hand so warmly, that the latter could not be mistaken as to the sincerity of his joy, and he saw that he had been expected with impatience, and was received with pleasure. "Come, come!" said Maximilian, "I will serve as your guide: such a man as you are ought not to be introduced by a servant. My sister is in the garden plucking the dead roses; my brother reading his two papers, *la Presse* and *les Débats*, within five steps of her, for wherever you see Madame Herbault, you have only to look within a circle of four yards and you will find M. Emmanuel, and 'reciprocally,' as they say at the Ecole Polytechnique." At the sound of their steps a young woman of twenty to five-and-twenty, dressed in a silk robe-de-chambre, and busily engaged in plucking the dead leaves off the splendid rose-tree, raised her head. This female was Julie, who had become, as the clerk of the house of Thomson and French had predicted, Madame Emmanuel Herbault. She uttered a cry of surprise at the sight of a stranger, and Maximilian began to laugh. "Don't disturb yourself, Julie," said he. "M. le Comte has only been two or three days

in Paris, but he already knows what a woman of fashion of the Marais is, and if he does not, you will show him."

"Ah, monsieur!" returned Julie, "it is treason in my brother to bring you thus, but he never has any regard for his poor sister. Penelon! Penelon!" An old man, who was digging busily at one of the beds of roses, stuck his spade in the earth, and approached, cap in hand, and striving to conceal a quid of tobacco he had just thrust into his cheek. A few locks of grey mingled with his hair, which was still thick and matted, whilst his bronzed features and determined glance announced the old sailor who had braved the heat of the equator and the storms of the tropics. "I think you hailed me, Mademoiselle Julie?" said he. Penelon had still preserved the habit of calling his master's daughter "Mademoiselle Julie," and had never been able to change the name to Madame Herbault. "Penelon," replied Julie, "go and inform M. Emmanuel of this gentleman's visit, and Maximilian will conduct him to the salon." Then, turning to Monte-Cristo,—"I hope you will permit me to leave you for a few minutes," continued she; and without awaiting any reply, disappeared behind a clump of trees, and entered the house by a lateral alley.

"I am sorry to see," observed Monte-Cristo to Morrel, "that I cause no small disturbance in your house."—"Look there," said Maximilian, laughing; "there is her husband changing his jacket for a coat. I assure you, you are well known in the Rue Meslay."

"Your family appears to me a very happy one!" said the count, as if speaking to himself.

"Oh, yes, I assure you, M. le Comte, they want nothing that can render them happy; they are young and cheerful, they are tenderly attached to each other, and with twenty-five thousand francs a year they fancy themselves as rich as Rothschild."—"Five-and-twenty thousand francs is

do.'—'Emmanuel,' returned my sister, 'the house of Morrel can only be carried on by a Morrel. Is it not worth 300,000 francs to save our father's name from the chances of evil fortune and failure?'—'I thought so,' replied Emmanuel; 'but I wished to have your advice.'—'This is my counsel:—Our accounts are made up and our bills paid; all we have to do is to stop the issue of any more, and close our office.' This was done instantly. It was three o'clock; at a quarter past, a merchant presented himself to insure two ships; it was a clear profit of 15,000 francs. 'Monsieur,' said Emmanuel, 'have the goodness to address yourself to M. Delaunay. We have quitted business.'—'How long?' inquired the astonished merchant. 'A quarter of an hour,' was the reply. And this is the reason, monsieur," continued Maximilian, "of my sister and brother-in-law having only 25,000 francs a year."

Maximilian had scarcely finished his story, during which the count's heart had seemed ready to burst, when Emmanuel entered, clad in a hat and coat. He saluted the count with the air of a man who is aware of the rank of his guest; then, after having led Monte-Cristo round the little garden, he returned to the house. A large vase of Japan porcelain, filled with flowers that impregnated the air with their perfume, stood in the salon. Julie, suitably dressed, and her hair arranged (she had accomplished this feat in less than ten minutes), received the count on his entrance. The songs of the birds were heard in an aviary hard by—the branches of false ebony-trees and rose acacias forming the border of the blue velvet curtains. Everything in this charming retreat, from the warble of the birds to the smile of the mistress, breathed tranquillity and repose. The count had felt, from the moment he entered the house, the influence of this happiness, and he remained silent and pensive, forgetting that he was expected to recommence the conversation, which had ceased after the first salutations had been exchanged. He perceived the pause, and, by a violent effort, tearing himself from his pleasing reverie—"Madame," said he at length, "I pray you to excuse my emotion, which must astonish you who are only accustomed to the happiness I meet here; but satisfaction is so new a sight to me, that I could never be weary of looking at yourself and your husband."

"We are very happy, monsieur," replied Julie; "but we have also known unhappiness, and few have ever undergone more bitter sufferings than ourselves." The count's features displayed an expression of the most intense curiosity.

"Oh, all this is a family history, as Château-Renaud told you the other day," observed Maximilian. "This humble picture would have but little interest for you, accustomed as you are to behold the pleasures and the misfortunes of the wealthy and illustrious; but such as we are, we have experienced bitter sorrows."—"And God has poured balm into your wounds, as He does to all those who are in affliction?" said Monte-Cristo, inquiringly.

"Yes, M. le Comte," returned Julie, "we may indeed say He has, for He has done for us what He grants only to His chosen; He sent us one of His angels." The count's cheeks became scarlet, and he coughed, in order to have an excuse for putting his handkerchief to his mouth. "Those born to wealth, and who have the means of gratifying every wish," said Emmanuel, "know not what is the real happiness of life: just as those who have been tossed on the stormy waters of the ocean on a few frail planks can alone estimate the value of a clear and serene sky."

Monte-Cristo rose, and without making any answer (for the tremulous-

ness of his voice would have betrayed his emotion) walked up and down the apartment with a slow step.

"Our magnificence makes you smile, M. le Comte," said Maximilian, who had followed him with his eyes. "No, no," returned Monte-Cristo, pale as death, pressing one hand on his heart to still its throbbings, whilst with the other he pointed to a crystal cover, beneath which a silken purse lay on a black velvet cushion. "I was wondering what could be the use of this purse, which contains a paper at one end and at the other a large diamond."—"M. le Comte," replied Maximilian, with an air of gravity, "those are our most precious family treasures."

"The stone seems very brilliant," answered the count.

"Oh, my brother does not allude to its value, although it has been estimated at 100,000 francs (£4,000); he means, that the articles contained in this purse are the relics of the angel I spoke of just now."

"This I do not comprehend; and yet I may not ask for an explanation, madam," replied Monte-Cristo, bowing. "Pardon me, I had no intention of committing an indiscretion."—"Indiscretion!—oh, you make us happy by giving us an occasion of expatiating on this subject. Did we intend to conceal the noble action this purse commemorates, we should not expose it thus. Oh! would we could relate it everywhere, and to everyone; so that the emotion of our unknown benefactor might reveal his presence."

"Ah! really," said Monte-Cristo, in a half-stifled voice.

"Monsieur," returned Maximilian, raising the glass cover, and respectfully kissing the silken purse, "this has touched the hand of a man who saved my father from suicide, us from ruin, and our name from shame and disgrace,—a man by whose matchless benevolence we, poor children, doomed to want and wretchedness, can at present hear every one envying our happy lot. This letter" (as he spoke, Maximilian drew a letter from

Morcerf's, that Messrs. Thomson and French were your bankers. That happened, as I told you, in 1829. For God's sake, tell me, did you know this Englishman?"

"But you tell me, also, that the house of Thomson and French have constantly denied having rendered you this service?"—"Yes."

"Then is it not probable that this Englishman may be some one who, grateful for a kindness your father had shown him, and which he himself had forgotten, has taken this method of requiting the obligation?"

"Everything is possible on such an occasion, even a miracle."

"What was his name?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"He gave no other name," answered Julie, looking earnestly at the count, "than that at the end of his letter—'Sinbad the Sailor.'"

"Which is evidently not his real name, but a fictitious one."

Then, noticing that Julie was struck with the sound of his voice,—

"Tell me," continued he, "was he not about my height, perhaps a little taller, his chin imprisoned, to use the word, in a high cravat; his coat closely buttoned up, and constantly taking out his pencil?"

"Oh, do you then know him?" cried Julie, whose eyes sparkled with joy.—"No," returned Monte-Cristo, "I only guessed. I knew a Lord Wilmore, who was constantly doing actions of this kind."

"Without revealing himself?"

"He was an eccentric being, and did not believe in the existence of gratitude."—"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Julie, clasping her hands. "In what did he believe, then?"

"He did not credit it at the period when I knew him," said Monte-Cristo, touched to the heart by the accents of Julie's voice: "but, perhaps, since then he has had proofs that gratitude does exist."

"And do you know this gentleman, monsieur?" inquired Emmanuel.

"Oh, if you do know him," cried Julie, "can you tell us where he is—where we can find him? Maximilian—Emmanuel—if we do but discover him, he must believe in the gratitude of the heart?" Monte-Cristo felt tears start into his eyes, and he again walked hastily up and down the room.—"In the name of Heaven!" said Maximilian, "if you know anything of him, tell us what it is."—"Alas!" cried Monte-Cristo, striving to repress his emotion. "If Lord Wilmore was your unknown benefactor, I fear you will never again see him. I parted from him, two years ago, at Palermo, and he was then on the point of setting out for the most remote regions; so that I fear he will never return."

"Oh, monsieur, this is cruel of you," said Julie, much affected; and the young lady's eyes swam with tears.

"Madame," replied Monte-Cristo, gravely, and gazing earnestly on the two liquid pearls that trickled down Julie's cheeks, "had Lord Wilmore seen what I now see, he would become attached to life, for the tears you shed would reconcile him to mankind;" and he held out his hand to Julie, who gave him hers, carried away by the look and accent of the count. "But," continued she, "Lord Wilmore had a family or friends, he must have known some one, can we not——"

"Oh, it is useless to inquire," returned the count; "he was not the man you seek for, he was my friend; he had no secrets from me, and he would have confided this also to me."

"And he told you nothing?"—"Not a word."

"And yet you instantly named him."

"Ah, in such a case one supposes——"

"Sister, sister," said Maximilian, coming to the count's aid, "monsieur

is quite right. Recollect what our excellent father so often told us, 'It was no Englishman that thus saved us.' " Monte-Cristo started. "What did your father tell you, M. Morrel?" said he, eagerly.

"My father thought that this action had been miraculously performed—he believed that a benefactor had arisen from the grave to save us. Oh, it was a touching superstition, monsieur, and although I did not myself believe it, I would not for the world have destroyed my father's faith in it. How often did he muse over it and pronounce the name of a dear friend—a friend lost to him for ever; and on his death-bed, when the near approach of eternity seemed to have illumined his mind with supernatural light, this thought, which had until then been but a doubt, became a conviction, and his last words were, 'Maximilian, it was Edmond Dantès?' " At these words the count's paleness, which had for some time been increasing, became alarming; he could not speak; he looked at his watch like a man who has forgotten the time; said a few hurried words to Madame Herbault, and pressing the hands of Emmanuel and Maximilian,—*"Madame,"* said he, "I trust you will allow me to visit you from time to time; I value your friendship, and feel grateful to you for your welcome, for this is the first time for many years that I have thus yielded to my feelings;" and he hastily quitted the apartment.

"This Count de Monte-Cristo is a singular man," said Emmanuel.

"Yes," answered Maximilian, "but I feel sure he has an excellent heart, and that he likes us."

"His voice went to my heart," observed Julie; "and two or three times I fancied I had heard it before."

great branch of communication with the Faubourg Saint-Honoré itself, one of the most important thoroughfares in the city of Paris.

In matters of speculation, however, though "*man* proposes," yet "*money* disposes." From some such difficulty the newly-named street died almost in birth, and the purchaser of the "kitchen-garden," having paid a high price for it, and being quite unable to find any one willing to take his bargain off his hands without a considerable loss, yet still clinging to the belief that at some future day he should obtain a sum for it that would repay him, not only for his past outlay, but also the interest upon the capital locked up in his new acquisition, contented himself with letting the ground temporarily to some market-gardeners, at a yearly rent of 500 francs. Thus, then, as already stated, the iron gate leading into the kitchen-garden had been closed up and left to the rust, which bade fair to destroy its hinges ere long, while, to prevent the ignoble glances of the diggers and delvers of the ground from presuming to sully the aristocratical enclosure belonging to the hotel, the gate in question had been boarded up to a height of six feet. True, the planks were not so closely adjusted but that a hasty peep might be obtained between their interstices; but the strict decorum and rigid propriety of the inhabitants of the hotel left no grounds for apprehending that advantage would be taken of that circumstance.

Horticulture seemed, however, to have been abandoned in the deserted kitchen-garden; and where the most choice and delicate of fruits and vegetables once reared their heads, a scanty crop of lucerne alone bore evidence of its being deemed worthy of cultivation. A small, low door gave egress from the walled space we have been describing into the projected street, the ground having been abandoned as unproductive by its various renters, and had now fallen so completely in general estimation as to return not even a fraction of the poor ten shillings per cent. it had originally paid. Towards the hotel the chestnut-trees we have before mentioned rose high above the wall, without in any way affecting the growth of other luxuriant shrubs and flowers that eagerly pressed forward to fill up the vacant spaces, as though asserting their right to enjoy the boon of light and air also. At one corner, where the foliage became so thick as almost to shut out day, a large stone bench and sundry rustic seats indicated that this sheltered spot was either in general favour or particular use by some inhabitant of the hotel, which was faintly discernible through the dense mass of verdure that partially concealed it, though situated but a hundred paces off.

Whoever had selected this retired portion of the grounds as the boundary of their walks, or scene of their meditative musings, was abundantly justified in their choice by the absence of all glare—the cool, refreshing shade—the screen it afforded from the scorching rays of the sun, that found no entrance there even during the burning days of hottest summer—the incessant and melodious warbling of birds, and the entire removal from either the noise of the street or the bustle of the hotel. On the evening of one of the warmest days spring had yet bestowed on the inhabitants of Paris, might be seen, negligently thrown upon the stone bench, a book, a parasol, and a work-basket, from which hung a partly-embroidered cambric handkerchief, while, at a little distance from these articles was a young female, standing close to the iron gate, endeavouring to discern something on the other side by means of the openings in the planks, whilst the earnestness of her attitude, and the fixed gaze with which she seemed to seek the object of her wishes, proved how much her feelings were interested in the matter. At that instant, the little side-door, leading

from the waste ground to the street, was noiselessly opened, and a tall powerful young man, dressed in a common grey blouse and velvet cap, but whose carefully-arranged hair, beard, and moustaches, all of the richest and glossiest black, but ill accorded with his plebeian attire, after casting a rapid glance around him, in order to assure himself he was unobserved, entered by this door, and carefully closing and securing it after him, proceeded with a hurried step towards the iron gate.

At the sight of him she expected, though probably not under such a costume, the female we have before mentioned started in terror, and was about to make a hasty retreat. But the eye of love had already seen, even through the narrow chinks of the wooden palisades, the movement of the white robe, and observed the fluttering of the blue sash fastened around the slender waist of his fair neighbour. Pressing his lips close to the opening, planks that prevented his further progress, he exclaimed, "Fear nothing, Valentine—it is I!" Again the timid girl found courage to return to the gate, saying, as she did so, "And wherefore come you so late to-day? It is almost the dinner-hour, and I have been compelled to exercise my utmost skill to get rid of the incessant watchfulness of my mother-in-law, as well as the espionage of my maid, who, no doubt, is employed to report all I do and say. Nor has it cost me a little trouble to free myself from the troublesome society of my brother, under pretence of coming hither to work undisturbed at my embroidery, which, by the way, I am in no hurry to finish. So pray excuse yourself as well as you can for having made me wait, and, after that, tell me why I see you in so singular a dress, that at first I did not recognize you."—"Dearest Valentine!" said the young man, "the difference between our respective stations makes me fear to offend you by speaking of my love, but yet I cannot find myself in your presence without longing to pour forth my soul, and to tell you how fondly

Think of that, Valentine ! There is nothing now to prevent my building myself a little hut on my plantation, and residing not twenty yards from you. Only imagine what happiness that would afford me. I can scarcely contain myself at the bare idea. Such felicity seems above all price—as a thing impossible and unattainable. But would you believe that I purchase all this delight, joy, and happiness, for which I would cheerfully have surrendered ten years of my life, at the small cost of 500 francs per annum, paid quarterly ! Henceforth we have nothing to fear. I am on my own ground, and have an undoubted right to place a ladder against the wall, and to look over when I please, without having any apprehensions of being taken off by the police as a suspicious character. I may also enjoy the precious privilege of assuring you of my fond, faithful, and unalterable affection, whenever you visit your favourite bower, unless, indeed, it offends your pride to listen to professions of love from the lips of a poor working man, clad in a blouse and cap.” A faint cry of mingled pleasure and surprise escaped from the lips of Valentine, who almost instantly said, in a saddened tone, as though some envious cloud darkened the joy which illumined her heart, “Alas ! no, Maximilian, this must not be, for many reasons ! We should presume too much on our own strength, and, like others, perhaps, be led astray by our blind confidence in each other’s prudence.”

“How can you for an instant entertain so unworthy a thought, dear Valentine ? Have I not, from the first blessed hour of our acquaintance, schooled all my words and actions to your sentiments and ideas ? And you have, I am sure, the fullest confidence in my honour. When you spoke to me of your experiencing a vague and indefinite sense of coming danger, I placed myself blindly and devotedly at your service, asking no other reward than the pleasure of being useful to you ; and have I ever since, by word or look, given you cause of regret for having selected me from the numbers that would willingly have sacrificed their lives for you ? You told me, my dear Valentine, that you were engaged to M. d’Epinay, and that your father was resolved upon completing the match, and that from his will there was no appeal, as M. de Villefort was never known to change a determination once formed. I kept in the background, as you wished, waiting not the decision of your heart or my own, but hoping Providence would graciously interpose in our behalf, and order events in our favour. But what cared I for delays or difficulties, so long as my sweet Valentine confessed she loved me, and accepted my fervent vows of un-failing constancy ? Blessed avowal ! the very recollection of which can at all times raise me even from despair itself. To hear you repeat those enrapturing words from time to time is all I ask, and to obtain that privilege I would cheerfully endure even double my present disquietudes.”

“Ah, Maximilian, that is the very thing that makes you so bold, and which renders me at once so happy and unhappy, that I frequently ask myself whether it is better for me to endure the harshness of my mother-in-law, and her blind preference for her own child, or to be, as I now am, insensible to any pleasure save such as I find in these our meetings, so fraught with danger to both.”

“I will not admit that word,” returned the young man ; “it is at once cruel and unjust. Is it possible to find a more submissive slave than myself ? You have permitted me to converse with you from time to time, Valentine, but forbidden my ever following you in your walks or elsewhere—have I not obeyed ? And since I found means to enter this enclosure to exchange a few words with you through this door—to be close to you with-

out being enabled to obtain a view of your dear features, I have even solicited to touch the tip of your glove through the small openings of the palisades, think you that at my age, and with my strength, this wall that now parts us would keep me from your side one instant, were it not that my respect for your wishes presents an impassable barrier? Never has a complaint or a murmur of your rigour escaped me. I have been bound by my promises as rigidly as any knight of olden times. Come, come, dearest Valentine, confess that what I say is true, lest I be tempted to call you unjust."

"It is indeed most true," said Valentine, as she passed the end of her slender fingers through a small opening in the planks, thus permitting her lover to press his lips to the taper finger, that almost instantly disappeared, "and you are a true and faithful friend; but still you acted from motives of self-interest, my dear Maximilian, for you well knew that from the moment in which you had manifested an opposite spirit all would have been ended between us. You promised to bestow on me the friendly affection of a brother. I, who have no friend but yourself upon earth, who am neglected and forgotten by my father, harassed and persecuted by my mother-in-law, and left to the sole companionship of a paralysed and speechless old man, whose withered hand can no longer press mine, and whose eye alone converses with me, while, doubtless, however fixed, chilled his frame, there still lingers in his heart the warmest tenderness for his poor grandchild. Oh, how bitter a fate is mine, to serve either as a victim or an enemy to all who are stronger than myself, while my only friend and supporter is but a living corpse! Indeed, indeed, Maximilian, I am very miserable, and you are right to love me for myself alone."

"Dear Valentine," replied the young man, deeply affected, "I will not say you are all I love in the world, for I dearly prize my sister and brother-

her sobs and tears. A rapid change took place in the young man's feelings. "Dearest, dearest Valentine !" exclaimed he, "forgive me if I have offended you, and forget the words I spoke if they have unwittingly caused you pain."

"No, Maximilian, I am not offended," answered she ; "but do you not see what a poor, helpless being I am, almost a stranger and an outcast in my father's house, where even he is seldom seen ; whose will has been thwarted, and spirits broken, from the age of ten years, beneath the iron rod so sternly exercised over me ; oppressed, mortified, and persecuted, day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute ; no person has cared for, even observed my sufferings, nor have I ever breathed one word on the subject save to yourself. Outwardly and in the eyes of the world, I am surrounded by kindness and affection ; but the reverse is the case. The general remark is, 'Oh, it cannot be expected that one of so stern a character as M. Villefort could lavish the tenderness some fathers do on their daughters. What though she has lost her own mother at a tender age, she has had the happiness to find a second mother in Madame de Villefort.' The world, however, is mistaken ; my father abandons me from utter indifference, while my mother-in-law detests me with a hatred so much the more terrible as it is veiled beneath a continual smile."—"Hate you, sweet Valentine !" exclaimed the young man ; "how is it possible for any one to do that ?"

"Alas !" replied the weeping girl, "I am obliged to own that my mother-in-law's aversion to me arises from a very natural source—her overweening love for her own child, my brother Edward."

"But why should it ?"—"Nay, I know not ; but, though unwilling to introduce money matters into our present conversation, I will just say thus much—that her extreme dislike to me has its origin in mercenary motives ; and I much fear she envies me the fortune I already enjoy in right of my mother, and which will be more than doubled at the death of M. and Madame Méran, whose sole heiress I am. Madame de Villefort has nothing of her own, and hates me for being so richly endowed. Alas ! how gladly would I exchange the half of this wealth for the happiness of at least sharing my father's love ! God knows, I would prefer sacrificing the whole, so that it would obtain me a happy and affectionate home."

"Poor Valentine !"

"I seem to myself as though living a life of bondage, yet at the same time am so conscious of my own weakness that I fear to break the restraint in which I am held, lest I fall utterly powerless and helpless. Then, too, my father is not a person whose orders may be infringed with impunity ; protected as he is by his high position and firmly-established reputation for talent and unswerving integrity, no one could oppose him ; he is all-powerful with even his king ; you he would crush at a word, and myself he would cause to expire of terror at his feet. Dear Maximilian, believe me when I assure you that I attempt not to resist my father's commands more on your account than my own ; for, though I could willingly sacrifice myself, I would not peril your safety."

"But wherefore, my sweet Valentine, do you persist in anticipating the worst, and in viewing everything through so gloomy a medium—why picture the future so fraught with evil ?"

"Because I judge it from the past."

"Still, consider that although I may not be, strictly speaking, what is termed an illustrious match for you, I am, for many reasons, not altogether so much beneath your alliance. The days when such distinctions were so

nicely weighed and considered no longer exist in France, and the first families of the monarchy have intermarried with those of the empire. The aristocracy of the lance has allied itself with the nobility of the cannon. Now I belong to this last-named class ; and certainly my prospects of military preferment are most encouraging as well as certain. My fortune, though small, is free and unfettered, and the memory of my late father respected in our country, Valentine, as that of the most upright and honourable merchant of the city ; I say our country, because you were born not far from Marseilles."

"Name not Marseilles, I beseech you, Maximilian ; that one word brings back my mother to my recollection—my angel mother, who died too soon for myself and all who knew her ; but who, after watching over her child during the brief period allotted to her in this world, now, I fondly hope and fully believe, contemplates her with pitying tenderness from those realms of bliss to which her pure spirit has flown. Ah, were she still living, we need fear nothing, Maximilian, for I would confide our love to her, and she would aid and protect us."

"I fear, Valentine," replied the lover, "that were she living I should never have had the happiness of knowing you ; you would then have been too happy to have stooped from your grandeur to bestow a thought on an humble, obscure individual like myself."

"It is you who are unkind, ay, and unjust too, now, Maximilian," cried Valentine ; "but there is one thing I wish to know."

"And what is that ?" inquired the young man, perceiving that Valentine hesitated and seemed at a loss how to proceed.

"Tell me truly, Maximilian, whether in former days, when our fathers dwelt at Marseilles, there ever existed any misunderstanding between them ?"—"Not that I am at all aware of," replied the young man,

the utterance of your name, that I was not surprised to see my father start, and almost tremble ; but I even thought (though that surely must have been a mistake) that M. Danglars underwent a similar emotion."

" 'Morrel ! Morrel !' cried my father, 'stop a bit ;' then, knitting his brows into a deep frown, he added, 'Surely this cannot be one of the Morrel family who lived at Marseilles, and gave us so much trouble from their being such violent Bonapartists—I mean about the year 1815.'—'I fancy,' replied M. Danglars, 'that the individual alluded to in the journal mademoiselle is reading is the son of the large shipowner there.'"

"Indeed !" answered Maximilian ; "and what said your father then, Valentine ?"—"Oh, such a dreadful thing, I dare not repeat it."

"Nay, dearest !" said the young man, "be not afraid to tell *me*—say, what was it ?"

" 'Ah,' continued my father, still frowning severely, 'their idolised emperor treated these madmen as they deserved ; he called them '*food for cannon*,' which was precisely all they were good for ; and I am delighted to see that the present government have adopted this salutary principle with all its pristine vigour ; if Algiers were good for nothing but to furnish out the means of carrying so admirable an idea into practice, it would be an acquisition well worthy of struggling to obtain. Though it certainly does cost France somewhat dear to assert its rights in that uncivilised country.' "

"The sentiments expressed were somewhat unfeeling, I must confess," said Maximilian ; "but do not let that tinge your fair cheek with the blush of shame, my gentle Valentine ; for I can assure you that, although in a different way, my father was not a jot or tittle behind yours in the heat of his political expressions : 'Why,' said he, 'does not the emperor, who has devised so many clever and efficient modes of improving the art of war, not form a regiment of lawyers, judges, and legal practitioners, sending them in the hottest fire the enemy could maintain, and using them to save better men ?' You see, my sweet Valentine, that for mildness of expression and imaginative benefits there is not much to choose between the language of either Royalist or Bonapartist. But what said M. Danglars to this burst of party spirit on the part of the *procureur du roi* ?"

"Oh, he laughed, and in that singular manner so peculiar to himself—half-malicious, half-ferocious ; his smile, even, has always made me shudder, it has so very unnatural a look—he almost immediately rose and took his leave ; then, for the first time, I observed the agitation of my grandfather, and I must tell you, Maximilian, that I am the only person capable of discerning emotion in the paralysed frame of my poor afflicted relative. And I suspected that the conversation that had been carried on in his presence (for no one ever cares to refrain from saying and doing what they like before the dear old man, without the smallest regard to his feelings) had made a strong impression on his mind ; for, naturally enough, it must have pained him to hear the emperor he so devotedly loved and served spoken of in that depreciating manner."

"The name of M. Noirtier," interposed Maximilian, "is celebrated throughout Europe ; he was a statesman of high standing ; and I know not whether you are aware, Valentine, that he took a leading part in every Bonaparteian conspiracy set on foot during the restoration of the Bourbons."—"Oh, I have often heard whispers of things that seem to me most strange—the father a Bonapartist, the son a Royalist ; what can have been the reason of so singular a difference in parties and politics ? But to resume my story ; I turned towards my grandfather, as though to

question him as to the cause of his emotion ; he looked expressively at the newspaper I had been reading. 'What is the matter, dear grandfather?' said I, 'are you pleased?' He gave me a sign in the affirmative. 'With what my father said just now?' He returned a sign in the negative. 'Perhaps you liked what M. Danglars remarked?' Another sign in the negative. 'Oh, then, you were glad to hear that M. Morrel (I durst not pronounce the dear name of Maximilian) had been made an officer of the Legion of Honour; was that it, dear grandpapa?' He signified assent in a way that convinced me he was more than glad—that he was delighted; only think of the poor old man's being so pleased to think that you, who were a perfect stranger to him, had been made an officer of the Legion of Honour! Perhaps, though, it was a mere whim on his part, for he is almost falling into a second childhood! but, for all that, I love him dearly, and pray that he may long be spared to me."

"How singular," murmured Maximilian, "that your father should apparently hate the very mention of my name, while your grandfather, on the contrary—— Well, well, it is no use to endeavour to find a reason for these things; strange, indeed, are the feelings brought into play by the action of party likes or dislikes."

"Hush!" cried Valentine, suddenly, "conceal yourself!—Go, go! Some one comes!" Maximilian leaped at one bound into his crop of lucerne, which he commenced pulling up in the most pitiless manner, under the pretext of being occupied in weeding it.

"Mademoiselle! mademoiselle!" exclaimed a voice from behind the trees. "Madame is searching for you everywhere; there are visitors in the drawing-room."

"Who is it?" inquired Valentine, much agitated, "are they ladies?"

"Oh, no, mademoiselle! I believe it is some grand prince, or a duke, or

mother say,—“Oh, that sad child ! but pray excuse him, he is really so clever.”

After the first and usual civilities, the count inquired after M. de Villefort. “My husband dines with the chancellor,” replied the young lady ; “he has just gone, and I am sure he’ll be exceedingly sorry not to have had the pleasure of seeing you before he went.” Two visitors who were there when the count arrived, having gazed at him with all their eyes, retired after that reasonable delay which politeness admits and curiosity requires. “Ah ! what is your sister Valentine doing ?” inquired Madame de Villefort of Edward ; “tell some one to bid her come here, that I may have the honour of introducing her to the count.”

“You have a daughter, then, madame ?” inquired the count ; “very young, I presume ?”—“The daughter of M. de Villefort,” replied the young wife, “by his first marriage, a fine well-grown girl.”

“But melancholy,” interrupted Master Edward, snatching the feathers out of the tail of a splendid parroquet that was screaming on its gilded perch, in order to make a plume for his hat. Madame de Villefort merely cried,—“Silence, Edward !” She then added,—“This young madcap is, however, very nearly right, and merely re-echoes what he has heard me say with pain a hundred times ; for Mademoiselle de Villefort is, in spite of all we can do to rouse her, of a melancholy disposition and taciturn habit, which frequently injure the effect of her beauty. But what detains her ? go, Edward, and see.”

“Because they are looking for her where she is not to be found.”

“And where are they looking for her ?”

“With grandpapa Noirtier.”

“And do you think she is not there ?”—“No, no, no, no, no, she is not there !” replied Edward, singing his words.

“And where is she, then ? If you know, why don’t you tell ?”

“She is under the great chestnut-tree,” replied the spoiled brat, as he gave, in spite of his mother’s cries, live flies to the parrot, who appeared to relish such “small deer” exclusively. Madame de Villefort stretched out her hand to ring, intending to direct her waiting-maid to the spot where she would find Valentine, when the young lady herself entered the apartment. She appeared much dejected ; and any person who considered her attentively might have observed the traces of recent tears in her eyes.

Valentine, whom we have in the rapid march of our narrative presented to our readers without formally introducing her, was a tall and graceful girl of nineteen years of age, with bright chestnut hair, deep blue eyes, and that languishing air so full of distinction which characterised her mother. Her white and slender fingers, her pearly neck, her cheeks tinted with varying hues, gave her at the first view the aspect of one of those lovely Englishwomen who have been so poetically compared in their manner to a swan admiring itself. She entered the apartment, and seeing near her stepmother the stranger of whom she had already heard so much, saluted him without any girlish awkwardness, or even lowering her eyes, and with an elegance that redoubled the count’s attention. He rose to return the salutation. “Mademoiselle de Villefort, my daughter-in-law,” said Madame de Villefort to Monte-Cristo, leaning back on her sofa and motioning towards Valentine with her hand. “And M. de Monte-Cristo, king of China, emperor of Cochin-China,” said the young imp, looking slyly towards his sister.

Madame de Villefort at this really did turn pale, and was very nearly

angry with this household plague, who answered to the name of Edward; but the count, on the contrary, smiled, and appeared to look at the boy complacently, which caused the maternal heart to bound again with joy and enthusiasm.

"But, madame," replied the count, continuing the conversation, and looking by turns at Madame de Villefort and Valentine, "have I not already had the honour of meeting yourself and mademoiselle before? I could not help thinking so just now; the idea came over my mind, and as mademoiselle entered the sight of her was an additional ray of light thrown on a confused remembrance; excuse me the remark."—"I do not think it likely, sir; Mademoiselle de Villefort is not very fond of society, and we very seldom go out," said the young lady.

"Then it was not in society that I met with mademoiselle or yourself, madame, or this charming little merry boy. Besides, the Parisian world is entirely unknown to me, for, as I believe I told you, I have been in Paris but very few days. No,—but, perhaps, you will permit me to call to mind—stay!" The count placed his hand on his brow as if to collect his thoughts. "No—it was somewhere—away from here—it was—I do not know—but it appears that this recollection is connected with a lovely sky and some religious fête; mademoiselle was holding flowers in her hand, the interesting boy was chasing a beautiful peacock in a garden, and you, madame, were under the trellis of some arbour. Pray come to my aid, madame; do not these circumstances bring to your mind some reminiscences?"

"No, indeed," replied Madame de Villefort; "and yet it appears to me, sir, that if I had met you anywhere, the recollection of you must have been imprinted on my memory."

"Perhaps M. le Comte saw us in Italy," said Valentine, timidly.

"Yes, in Italy, it was in Italy that I met you," replied M. de Monte-Cristo.

as I told you, Mademoiselle de Villefort and your young son were absent, you conversed for a considerable time with somebody?"

"Yes, in truth, yes," answered the young lady, turning very red, "I do remember conversing with an individual wrapped in a long woollen mantle; he was a medical man, I think."—"Precisely so, madame; this man was myself; for a fortnight I had been at that hotel, during which period I had cured my valet-de-chambre of a fever, and my landlord of the jaundice, so that I really acquired a reputation as a skilful physician. We discoursed a long time, madame, on different subjects; of Perugino, of Raffaelle, of manners, customs, of the famous *aquatofana*, of which they had told you, I think you said, that certain individuals in Perusa had preserved the secret."

"Yes, true," replied Madame de Villefort, with a kind of uneasiness, "I remember now."

"I do not recollect now all the various subjects of which we discoursed, madame," continued the count, with perfect calmness; "but I perfectly remember that, falling into the error which others had entertained respecting me, you consulted me as to the health of Mademoiselle de Villefort."—"

"Yes, really, sir, you were in fact a medical man," said Madame de Villefort, "since you had cured the sick."

"Molière or Beaumarchais would reply to you, madame, that it was precisely because I was not, that I had cured my patients; for myself, I am content to say to you that I have studied chemistry and the natural sciences somewhat deeply, but still only as an amateur, you understand."—"At this moment the clock struck six. "It is six o'clock," said Madame de Villefort, evidently agitated. "Valentine, will you not go and see if your grandpapa will have his dinner?" Valentine rose, and saluting the count, left the apartment without replying a single word.

"Oh, madame!" said the count, when Valentine had left the room, "was it on my account that you sent Mademoiselle de Villefort away?"

"By no means," replied the young lady quickly; "but this is the hour when we give to M. Noirtier the sad repast which supports his sad existence. You are aware, sir, of the deplorable condition of my husband's father?"

"Yes, madame, M. de Villefort spoke of it to me—a paralysis, I think."

"Alas, yes! there is an entire want of movement in the frame of the poor old gentleman; the mind alone is still active in this human machine, and that is faint and flickering, like the light of a lamp about to expire. But excuse me, sir, for talking of our domestic misfortunes; I interrupted you at the moment when you were telling me that you were a skilful chemist."—"No, madame, I did not say so much as that," replied the count, with a smile; "quite the contrary. I have studied chemistry because, having determined to live in eastern climates, I have been desirous of following the example of King Mithridates."

"*Mithridates, rex Ponticus*," said the young scamp, as he tore some beautiful portraits out of a splendid album, "the individual who breakfasted every morning with a cup of poison *à la crème*."

"Edward, you naughty boy!" exclaimed Madame de Villefort, snatching the mutilated book from the urchin's grasp; "you are positively past bearing; you really disturb the conversation: go, leave us, and join your sister Valentine in dear grandpapa Noirtier's room."

"The album," said Edward, sulkily.

"What do you mean?—the album?"—"I want the album."

"How dare you tear out the drawings?"

"Oh, it amuses me."—"Go—go directly."

"I won't go unless you give me the album," said the boy, seating himself doggedly in an arm-chair, according to his habit of never giving way.—
"Take it, then, and pray disturb us no longer," said Madame de Villefort, giving the album to Edward, who then went towards the door, led by his mother. The count followed her with his eyes.

"Let us see if she shuts the door after him," he muttered. Madame de Villefort closed the door carefully after the child, the count appearing not to notice her; then casting a scrutinising glance around the chamber, the young wife returned to her chair, in which she seated herself. "Allow me to observe, madame," said the count, with that kind tone he could assume so well, "you are really very severe with that dear clever child."—"Oh, sometimes severity is quite necessary," replied Madame de Villefort, with all a mother's real firmness.

"It was his Cornelius Nepos that Master Edward was repeating when he referred to King Mithridates," continued the count, "and you interrupted him in a quotation which proves that his tutor has by no means neglected him, for your son is really advanced for his years."

"The fact is, M. le Comte," answered the mother, agreeably flattered, "he has great aptitude, and learns all that is set before him. He has but one fault, he is somewhat wilful; but really, on referring for the moment to what he said, do you truly believe that Mithridates used these precautions, and that these precautions were efficacious?"

"I think so, madame, because I—I, who now address you, have made use of them, that I might not be poisoned at Naples, at Palermo, and at Smyrna—that is to say, on three several occasions of my life, when, but for these precautions, I must have lost my life."—"And your precautions were successful?"

"Completely so."—"Yes, I remember now your mentioning to me at

and are reducible to figures, like an algebraic equation ; but go on, I pray of you ; what you say interests me to the greatest degree."

"Well," replied Monte-Cristo, "suppose, then, that this poison was brucine, and you were to take a milligramme the first day, two milligrammes the second day, and so on. Well ! at the end of ten days you would have taken a centigramme ; at the end of twenty days, increasing another milligramme, you would have taken three hundred centigrammes ; that is to say, a dose which you would support without inconvenience, and which would be very dangerous for any other person who had not taken the same precautions as yourself. Well, then, at the end of a month, when drinking water from the same *carafe*, you would kill the person who had drank this water as well as yourself, without your perceiving, otherwise than from slight inconvenience, that there was any poisonous substance mingled with this water."

"Do you know any other counter-poisons ?"—"I do not."

"I have often read, and read again, the history of Mithridates," said Madame de Villefort, in a tone of reflection, "and had always considered it as a fable."

"No, madame, contrary to most history, it is a truth ; but what you tell me, madame, what you inquire of me, is not the result of a chance question ; for two years since you asked me the same questions, and said, too, that for a very long time this history of Mithridates occupied your mind."

"True, sir. The two favourite studies of my youth were botany and mineralogy ; and subsequently, when I learned that the use of simples frequently explained the whole history of a people, and the entire life of individuals in the East, as flowers betoken and symbolize a love affair, I have regretted I was not a man, that I might have been a Flamel, a Fontana, or a Cabanis."

"And the more, madame," said Monte-Cristo, "as the Orientals do not confine themselves, as did Mithridates, to make a cuirass of his poisons, but they also make them a dagger. Science becomes, in their hands, not only a defensive weapon, but still more frequently an offensive one ; the one serves against all their physical sufferings, the other against all their enemies ; with opium, with belladonna, with brucæa, snake-wood, the cherry-laurel, they put to sleep all those who would arouse them. There is not one of those women, Egyptian, Turk, or Greek, whom here you call 'good women,' who do not know how, by means of chemistry, to stupefy a doctor, and in psychology to amaze a confessor."—"Really !" said Madame de Villefort, whose eyes sparkled with strange fire at this conversation.

"Eh, indeed ! Yes, madame," continued Monte-Cristo, "the secret dramas of the East begin and end thus, from the plant which can create love, to the plant that can cause death ; from the draught which opens heaven before your eyes, to that which plunges a man in hell ! There are as many shades of every kind as there are caprices and peculiarities in human, physical, and moral nature ; and I will say further—the art of these chemists knows excellently well how to accommodate and proportion the remedy and the ill to its yearnings of love, or its desires for vengeance."

"But, sir," remarked the lady, "these eastern societies, in the midst of which you have passed a portion of your existence, are as wild and visionary as the tales that come from their strange land. A man can easily be put out of the way there, then ; it is, indeed, the Bagdad and Bassora of M. Galland. The sultans and viziers, who rule over such society, and who constitute what in France we call the government, are, in fact, really

these Haroun-al-Raschids and Giaffars, who not only pardon a poisoner, but even make him a prime minister, if his crime has been an ingenious one, and who, under such circumstances, have the whole story written in letters of gold, to divert their hours of idleness and *ennui*."

"By no means, madame; the fanciful exists no longer in the East. There are there now, disguised under other names, and concealed under other costumes, agents of police, magistrates, attorney-generals, and bailiffs. They hang, behead, and impale their criminals in the most agreeable possible manner; but some of these, like clever rogues, have contrived to escape human justice, and succeed in their fraudulent enterprises by cunning stratagems. Amongst us a simpleton, possessed by the demon of hate or cupidity, who has an enemy to destroy, or some near relation to dispose of, goes straight to the grocer's or druggist's, gives a false name, which leads more easily to his detection than his real one, and purchases, under a pretext that the rats prevent him from sleeping, five or six pennyworth of arsenic—if he is really a cunning fellow, he goes to five or six different druggists or grocers, and thereby becomes only five or six times more easily traced;—then, when he has acquired his specific, he administers duly to his enemy, or near kinsman, a dose of arsenic which would make a mammoth or mastodon burst, and which, without rhyme or reason, makes his victim utter groans which alarm the entire neighbourhood. Then arrive a crowd of policemen and constables. They fetch a doctor, who opens the dead body, and collects from the entrails and stomach a quantity of arsenic in a spoon. Next day a hundred newspapers relate the fact, with the names of the victim and the murderer. The same evening the grocer or grocers, druggist or druggists, come and say, 'It was I who sold the arsenic to the gentleman accused;' and rather than not recognize the guilty purchaser, they will recognize twenty. Then the foolish criminal is taken, imprisoned, interrogated, confronted, confounded,

Poison acts particularly on one organ or the other—one on the stomach, another on the brain, another on the intestines. Well, the poison brings on a cough, the cough an inflammation of the lungs, or some other complaint catalogued in the book of science, which, however, by no means precludes it from being decidedly mortal ; and if it were not, would be sure to become so, thanks to the remedies applied by foolish doctors, who are generally bad chemists, and which will act in favour of or against the malady, as you please ; and then there is a human being killed according to all the rules of art and skill, and of whom justice learns nothing, as was said by a terrible chemist of my acquaintance, the worthy Abbé Adelmonte de Taormine, in Sicily, who has studied these national phenomena very profoundly.”

“It is quite frightful, but deeply interesting,” said the young lady, motionless with attention. “I thought, I must confess, that these tales were inventions of the middle ages.”——“Yes, no doubt, but improved upon by ours. What is the use of time, encouragements, medals, crosses, Monthyon prizes, &c., &c., if they do not lead society towards more complete perfection? Yet man will never be perfect until he learns to create and destroy : he does know how to destroy, and that is half way on the road.”

“So,” added Madame de Villefort, constantly returning to her object, “the poisons of the Borgias, the Medicis, the Renés, the Ruggieris, and later, probably, that of Baron de Trenck, whose story has been so misused by modern drama and romance——”

“Were objects of art, madame, and nothing more,” replied the count. “Do you suppose that the real *savant* addresses himself stupidly to the mere individual? By no means. Science loves eccentricities, leaps and bounds, trials of strength, fancies, if I may be allowed so to term them. Thus, for instance, the excellent Abbé Adelmonte, of whom I spake to you just now, made in this way some marvellous experiments.”

“Really !”

“Yes ; I will mention one to you. He had a remarkably fine garden, full of vegetables, flowers, and fruit. From amongst these vegetables he selected the most simple—a cabbage, for instance. For three days he watered this cabbage with a distillation of arsenic ; on the third, the cabbage began to droop and turn yellow. At that moment he cut it. In the eyes of everybody it seemed fit for table, and preserved its wholesome appearance. It was only poisoned to the Abbé Adelmonte. He then took the cabbage to the room where he had rabbits—for the Abbé Adelmonte had a collection of rabbits, cats, and guinea-pigs, equally fine as his collection of vegetables, flowers, and fruit. Well, the Abbé Adelmonte took a rabbit, and made it eat a leaf of the cabbage. The rabbit died. What magistrate would find, or even venture to insinuate, anything against this? What procureur du roi has ever ventured to draw up an accusation against M. Magendie or M. Flourens, in consequence of the rabbits, cats, and guinea-pigs they have killed?—not one. So, then, the rabbit dies, and justice takes no notice. This rabbit dead, the Abbé Adelmonte has its entrails taken out by his cook and thrown on the dunghill ; on this dunghill was a hen, who, pecking these intestines, was, in her turn, taken ill, and dies next day. At the moment when she was struggling in the convulsions of death, a vulture was flying by (there are a good many vultures in Adelmonte’s country) ; this bird darts on the dead bird, and carries it away to a rock, where it dines off its prey. Three days afterwards, this poor vulture, who has been very much indisposed since that dinner, feels

very giddy, suddenly, whilst flying aloft in the clouds, and falls heavily into a fish-pond. The pike, eels, and carp, eat greedily always, as everybody knows—well, they feast on the vulture. Well, suppose the next day, one of these eels, or pike, or carp, is served at your table, poisoned as they are to the third generation. Well, then, your guest will be poisoned in the fifth generation, and die, at the end of eight or ten days, of pains in the intestines, sickness, or abscess of the pylorus. The doctors open the body and say, with an air of profound learning, 'The subject has died of a tumour on the liver, or of typhoid fever!'

"But," remarked Madame de Villefort, "all these circumstances which you link thus one to another may be broken by the least accident; the vulture may not pass at the precise moment, or may fall a hundred yards from the fish-pond."

"Ah, this it is which is art. To be a great chemist in the East, we must direct chance; and this is to be achieved."—Madame de Villefort was deep in thought, yet listened attentively. "But," she exclaimed, suddenly, "arsenic is indelible, indestructible; in what way soever it is absorbed, it will be found again in the body of the creature from the moment when it has been taken in sufficient quantity to cause death."

"Precisely so," cried Monte-Cristo—"precisely so; and this is what I said to my worthy Adelmonte. He reflected, smiled, and replied to me by a Sicilian proverb, which I believe is also a French proverb, 'My son, the world was not made in a day—but in seven. Return on Sunday.' On the Sunday following I did return to him. Instead of having watered his cabbage with arsenic, he had watered it this time with a solution of salts, having their basis in strychnine, *strychnos colubrina*, as the learned term it. Now, the cabbage had not the slightest appearance of disease in the world, and the rabbit had not the smallest distrust; yet, five minutes

the heart of a fellow-creature, or will administer to him, in order to remove him from the surface of the globe on which we move with life and animation, that quantity of arsenic of which we just now talked. Such a thing is really out of rule—eccentric or stupid. To attain such a point, the blood must be warmed to thirty-six degrees, the pulse be, at least, at ninety, and the feelings excited beyond the ordinary limit. But if passing, as we do in philology, from the word itself to its softened synonym, you make an elimination—a simple change of words : instead of committing an ignoble assassination, if you merely and simply remove from your path the individual who is in your way, and that without shock or violence, without the display of those sufferings which, becoming a punishment, make a martyr of the victim, and of him who inflicts them a butcher, in every sense of the word ; if there be no blood, no groans, no convulsions, and, above all, that horrid and compromising moment of accomplishing the act, then one escapes the clutch of the human law, which says to you, ‘Do not disturb society!’ This is the mode in which they manage these things, and succeed in eastern climes, where there are grave and phlegmatic persons who care very little for the questions of time in conjunctures of importance.”——“Yet conscience remains!” remarked Madame de Villefort, in an agitated voice, and with a stifled sigh.

“Yes,” answered Monte-Cristo, “happily, yes, conscience does remain ; and if it did not, how wretched we should be! After every action requiring exertion, it is conscience that saves us, for it supplies us with a thousand good excuses, of which we alone are judges ; and these reasons, how excellent soever in producing sleep, would avail us but very little before a tribunal, when we were tried for our lives. Thus Richard III., for instance, was marvellously served by his conscience after the putting away of the two children of Edward IV. ; in fact, he could say, ‘These two children of a cruel and persecuting king, who have inherited the vices of their father, which I alone could perceive in their juvenile propensities—these two children are impediments in my way of promoting the happiness of the English people, whose unhappiness they (the children) would infallibly have caused.’ Thus was Lady Macbeth served by her conscience, when she sought to give her son, and not her husband (whatever Shakspeare may say), a throne. Ah, maternal love is a great virtue, a powerful motive—so powerful that it excuses a multitude of things, even if, after Duncan’s death, Lady Macbeth had been at all pricked by her conscience.”

Madame de Villefort listened with avidity to these appalling maxims and horrible paradoxes, delivered by the count with that ironical simplicity which was peculiar to him. After a moment’s silence, the lady inquired, “Do you know,” she said, “M. le Comte, that you are a very terrible reasoner, and that you look at the world through a somewhat distempered medium? Have you really measured the world by scrutinies, or through alembics and crucibles? For, truth to say, you are a great chemist, and the elixir you administered to my son, which recalled him to life almost instantaneously—”

“Oh, do not place any reliance on that, madame ; *one* drop of that elixir sufficed to recall life to a dying child, but three drops would have impelled the blood into his lungs in such a way as to have produced most violent palpitations ; six would have suspended his respiration, and caused syncope more serious than that in which he was ; ten would have destroyed him. You know, madame, how suddenly I snatched him from those phials, which he so imprudently touched?”——“Is it, then, so terrible a poison?”

“Oh, no ! In the first place, let us agree that the word poison does not

exist, because in medicine use is made of the most violent poisons, which become, according as they are made use of, most salutary remedies."

"What, then, is it?"

A skilful preparation of my friend's the worthy Abbé Adelmonte, who taught me the use of it."—"Oh," observed Madame de Villefort, "it must be an admirable anti-spasmodic."

"Perfect, madame, as you have seen," replied the count; "and I frequently make use of it—with all possible prudence, though, be it observed," he added, with a smile of intelligence.

"Most assuredly," responded Madame de Villefort, in the same tone. "As for me, so nervous, and so subject to fainting-fits, I should require a Doctor Adelmonte to invent for me some means of breathing freely and tranquillising my mind, in the fear I have of dying some fine day of suffocation. In the meanwhile, as the thing is difficult to find in France, and your abbé is not probably disposed to make a journey to Paris on my account, I must continue to use the anti-spasmodics of M. Planché; and mint and Hoffman's drops are amongst my favourite remedies. Here are some lozenges which I have made up on purpose; they are compounded doubly strong." Monte-Cristo opened the tortoise-shell box, which the lady presented to him, and imbibed the odour of the lozenges with the air of an amateur who thoroughly appreciated their composition. "They are indeed exquisite," he said; "but as they are necessarily submitted to the process of deglutition—a function which it is frequently impossible for a fainting person to accomplish—I prefer my own specific."

"Undoubtedly, and so should I prefer it, after the effects I have seen produced; but of course it is a secret, and I am not so indiscreet as to ask it of you."—"But I," said Monte-Cristo, rising as he spoke—"I am gallant enough to offer it you."

CHAPTER LIII.

"ROBERT LE DIABLE."

THE pretext of an opera engagement was so much the more feasible, as there chanced to be on that very night a more than ordinary attraction at the Académie Royale. Levasseur, who had been suffering under severe illness, made his reappearance in the character of Bertram, and, as usual, the announcement of the most admired production of the favourite composer of the day had attracted an audience consisting of the very *élite* of Parisian fashion. Morcerf, like most other young men of rank and fortune, had his orchestral stall, with the certainty of always finding a seat in at least a dozen of the principal boxes occupied by persons of his acquaintance; he had, moreover, his right of entry into the omnibus box. Château-Renaud rented a stall beside his own, while Beauchamp, in his editorial capacity, had unlimited range all over the theatre. It happened that on that particular night the minister's box was placed at the disposal of Lucien Debray, who offered it to the Count de Morcerf, who again, upon his mother's rejection of it, sent it to Danglars, with an intimation that he should probably do himself the honour of joining the baroness and her daughter during the evening, in the event of their accepting the box in question. The ladies received the offer with too much pleasure to dream of a refusal. To no class of persons is the presentation of a gratuitous opera-box more acceptable than to the wealthy millionaire, who still hugs economy while boasting of carrying a king's ransom in his waistcoat-pocket.

Danglars had, however, protested against showing himself in a ministerial box, declaring that his political principles, as well as being a member of the opposition party, would not permit him so to commit himself; the baroness had, therefore, despatched a note to Lucien Debray, bidding him call for them, it being wholly impossible for her to go alone with her daughter to the opera. There is no gainsaying the plain fact that a very unfavourable construction would have been put upon the circumstance of two females going together to a public place, while the addition of a third, in the person of her mother's admitted lover, enabled Mademoiselle Danglars to defy malice and ill-nature while visiting so celebrated a place of amusement. Thus, then, we perceive that for a mother, however innocent and pure-minded, to conduct her child alone to operas or spectacles, would be deemed a breach of decorum; but to go thither under the guidance of one who, if not actually her seducer, might in time become so, made all right, and set the world at defiance. Let others reconcile these strange inconsistencies if they will; we confess it above our powers!

The curtain rose, as usual, to an almost empty house, it being one of the absurdities of Parisian fashion never to appear at the opera until after the commencement of the performances, so that the first act is generally played without the slightest attention being paid to it, that part of the audience already assembled being too much occupied in observing the fresh arrivals, and noting each batch of *élégantes* as they take possession of their boxes, to have eyes or ears for the business of the stage; while the noise of opening and shutting doors, with the mingled buzz of many conversations, effectually prevents even those few who would listen to the orchestra from being able to do so. "Surely," said Albert, as the door of a box on the first circle opened, and a lady entered, resplendent with beauty and jewels, "that must be the Countess G——."

"And who may she be, pray?" inquired Château-Renaud, carelessly.

"What a question ! Now, do you know, baron, I have a great mind to pick a quarrel with you for asking it ; as if all the world did not know who the Countess G—— was."

"Ah, to be sure !" replied Château-Renaud ; "I remember now—your lovely Venetian, is it not ?"—"Herself !" At this moment the countess perceived Albert, and returned his salutation with a graceful smile. "You are acquainted with her, it seems ?" said Château-Renaud.—"Franz introduced me to her at Rome," replied Albert.

"Well, then, will you do as much for me in Paris as he did for you in the 'Queen of Cities ?'—" "With much pleasure."

"Silence !" exclaimed the audience. This manifestation on the part of the spectators of their wish to be allowed to enjoy the rich music then issuing from the stage and orchestra, produced not the slightest effect on the two young men, who continued talking as though they had not even heard it. "The countess was present at the races in the Champ-de-Mars," said Château-Renaud.—"To-day ?"

"Yes."—"Bless me ! I quite forgot the races. Did you bet ?"

"Oh, merely a paltry fifty louis."

"And who was the winner ?"—"Nautilus. I betted on him."

"But there were three races, were there not ?"—"Yes ; there was the prize given by the Jockey Club—a gold cup, you know—and a very singular circumstance occurred about that race."

"What was it ?"—"Silence !" again vociferated the music-loving part of the audience.—"Why, that it was gained by a horse and rider utterly unknown on the course."—"Is that possible ?"

"True as day. The fact was, nobody had observed a horse entered by the name of Vampa, or that of a jockey styled Job, when, at the last moment, a splendid roan, mounted by a jockey about as big as your fist, presented themselves at the starting-post. They were obliged to stuff at

she scarcely vouchsafed to waste the glances of her large black eyes even upon the business of the stage. "I tell you what, my dear fellow," said Château-Renaud, "I cannot imagine what objection you can possibly have to Mademoiselle Danglars—that is, setting aside her want of ancestry and somewhat inferior rank, which, by the way, I don't think you care very much about. Now, barring all that, I mean to say she is a deuced fine girl!"

"Handsome, certainly," replied Albert, "but not to my taste, which I confess, inclines to a softer, gentler, and more feminine style than that possessed by the young lady in question."—"Bless my heart!" exclaimed Château-Renaud, who, because he had seen his thirtieth summer, fancied himself duly warranted in assuming a sort of paternal air with his more youthful friend, "you young people are never satisfied: why, what would you have more? your parents have chosen you a bride who might serve as the living model of the 'Hunting Diana,' and yet you are not content."

"No, for that very resemblance affrights me; I should have liked something more in the manner of the Venus of Milo or Capua; but this chaste-loving Diana, continually surrounded by her nymphs, gives me a sort of alarm, lest she should some day entail on me the fate of Actæon."

And, indeed, it required but one glance of Mademoiselle Danglars to comprehend the justness, as well as nature, of Morcerf's remark—"she was certainly handsome," but her beauty was of too marked and decided a character to please a fastidious taste; her hair was raven black, but amid its natural waves might be seen a species of rebellion to the hand that sought to band and braid it; her eyes, of the same colour as her hair, were richly fringed and surmounted by well-arched brows, whose great defect, however, consisted in an almost habitual frown; while her whole physiognomy wore that expression of firmness and decision so little in accordance with the gentler attributes of her sex—her nose was precisely what a statuary would have chosen for a chiselled Juno. Her mouth, which might have been found fault with as too large, displayed teeth of peculiar whiteness, rendered still more conspicuous by the over-redness of her lips, beside which her naturally pale complexion seemed even more colourless. But that which completed the almost masculine look Morcerf found so little to his taste, was a dark mole, of much larger dimensions than these freaks of nature generally are, placed just at the corner of her mouth; and the effect tended to increase the expression of unbending resolution and self-dependence that formed the characteristics of her countenance. The rest of Mademoiselle Eugénie's person was in perfect keeping with the head just described; she, indeed, reminded you of the 'Hunting Diana,' as Château-Renaud observed, but with a more haughty and resolute air than statuary has bestowed on the "Chaste Goddess of the silver bow." As regarded her attainments, the only fault to be found with them was the same that a fastidious connoisseur might have found with her beauty, that they were somewhat too erudite and masculine for so young a person: she was a perfect linguist; a first-rate artist; wrote poetry, and composed music; to the study of the latter she professed to be entirely devoted, studying it with an indefatigable perseverance, assisted by a schoolfellow who, having been educated with a view of turning her talents to account, was now busily engaged in improving her vocal powers, in order to take (what she was assured by her friends she would infallibly attain) a leading position at the Academy of Music. It was rumoured that she was an object of almost paternal interest to one of the principal composers of the day, who excited her to spare no pains in the cultivation

of her voice, which might hereafter prove a source of wealth and independence. But this counsel effectually decided Mademoiselle Danglars never to commit herself by being seen in public with one destined for a theatrical life ; and acting upon this principle, the banker's daughter, though perfectly willing to allow Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly (for so was the future *débutante* named) to practise with her through the day, took especial care not to compromise herself by being seen in her company. Still, though not actually received at the Hôtel Danglars in the light of an acknowledged friend, Louise was treated with far more kindness and consideration than is usually bestowed on that most unfortunate class of deserving females styled governesses.

The curtain fell almost immediately after the entrance of Madame Danglars into her box, the band quitted the orchestra for the accustomed half-hour's interval allowed between the acts, and the audience were left at liberty to promenade the salon or lobbies, or to pay and receive visits in their respective boxes. Morcerf and Château-Renaud were amongst the first to avail themselves of this permission. For an instant the idea struck Madame Danglars that this eagerness on the part of the young viscount arose from his impatience to join her party, and she whispered her expectations to her daughter, that Albert was hurrying to pay his respects to them. Mademoiselle Eugénie, however, merely returned a dissenting movement of the head, while, with a cold smile, she directed the attention of her mother to an opposite *loge*, situated on the first circle, in which sat the Countess G——, and where Morcerf had just made his appearance. "So we meet again, my travelling friend, do we?" cried the countess, extending her hand to him with all the warmth and cordiality of an old acquaintance ; "it was really very good of you to recognise me so quickly, and still more so to bestow your first visit on me."

"Be assured," replied Albert, "that if I had been aware of your arrival

my surprise, when, upon returning home, the first object I met on the staircase was the identical jockey in the pink jacket ! I concluded that, by some singular chance, the owner of the winning horse must live in the same hôtel as myself ; but, lo ! as I entered my apartments I beheld the very gold cup awarded as a prize to the unknown horse and rider. Inside the cup was a small piece of paper, on which were written these words—
‘ From Lord Ruthven to Countess G——.’”

“ Precisely ; I was sure of it,” said Morcerf.—“ Sure of what ?”

“ That the owner of the horse was Lord Ruthven himself.”

“ What Lord Ruthven do you mean ?”

“ Why, our Lord Ruthven—the Vampire of the Salle Argentino !”

“ Mercy upon me !” exclaimed the countess ; “ is he here too ?”

“ To be sure,—why not ?”

“ And you visit him ?—meet him at your own house and elsewhere ?”

“ I assure you he is my most intimate friend, and M. de Château-Renaud has also the honour of his acquaintance.”—“ But what makes you so convinced of his being the winner of the Jockey-Club prize ?”

“ Was not the winning horse entered by the name of Vampa ?”

“ What of that ?”——“ Why, do you not recollect it was the appellation of the celebrated bandit by whom I was made prisoner ?”

“ True.”——“ And from whose hands the count extricated me in so wonderful a manner ?”

“ To be sure, I remember it all now.”——“ Now I argue from the circumstance of the horse and bandit bearing the same singular name, that the count was the person to whom the unknown horse belonged.”

“ But what could have been his motive for sending the cup to me ?”

“ In the first place, because I had spoken much of you to him, as you may believe ; and in the second, because he delighted to see a country-woman take so lively an interest in his success.”

“ I trust and hope you never repeated to the count all the foolish remarks we used to make about him ?”

“ I should not like to affirm upon oath that I have not. Besides, his presenting you the cup under the name of Lord Ruthven proves his knowledge of the comparison instituted between himself and that individual.”

“ Oh, but that is dreadful ! Why, the man must owe me a fearful grudge for so doing.”——“ Does his offering you the fruits of his victory seem like the conduct of one who felt ill-will towards you ?”

“ No ! certainly not !”——“ Well, then——”

“ And so this singular being is in Paris ?”——“ He is.”

“ And what effect does he produce ?”——“ Why,” said Albert, “ certainly, during the first week of his arrival here, he was the great lion of the day ; nothing else was thought of or talked about but the wonderful Count of Monte-Cristo and his extraordinary actions ; then the coronation of the Queen of England took place, followed almost immediately afterwards by the robbery of Mademoiselle Mars’ diamonds ; and two such interesting events turned public attention into other channels.”

“ My good fellow,” said Château-Renaud, “ the count happens to be so great a favourite of yours, that you treat him as carefully and delicately as though he were your best and most intimate friend. Do not believe what Albert is telling you, madame la comtesse ; so far from the sensation excited in the Parisian circles by the appearance of the Count of Monte-Cristo having abated, I take upon myself to declare that it is as strong as ever. His first astounding act upon coming amongst us was to present a pair of horses, worth 32,000 francs, to Madame Danglars ; his second, the almost

miraculous preservation of Madame de Villefort's life ; now it seems that he has carried off the prize awarded by the Jockey Club ! I therefore assert and maintain, in despite of whatever Morcerf may advance, that not only is the count the object of universal remark, interest, and curiosity, at this present moment, but also that he will continue to be so while he pleases to exhibit an eccentricity of conduct and action which, after all, may be his ordinary mode of amusing himself as well as the world."

"Perhaps you are right," said Morcerf ; "but just cast your eyes towards the box formerly belonging to the Russian ambassador, and tell me, if you can, who is the present occupant of it?"

"Which box do you mean?"—"The one between the pillars on the first tier—it seems to have been fitted up entirely afresh."

"Did you observe any one during the first act?"

"Where?"—"In that box."

"No!" replied the countess ; "it was certainly empty during the first act ;" then, resuming the subject of their previous conversation, she said, "And so you really believe it was your mysterious Count of Monte-Cristo that gained the prize?"—"I am sure of it."

"And who afterwards sent the golden cup to me?"

"Undoubtedly!"—"Then, do you know," said the countess, "I have a strong inclination to return it? I cannot understand receiving such presents from a person wholly unknown to you."

"Do no such thing, I beg of you ; it would only produce a second goblet, formed of a magnificent sapphire, or hollowed out of a gigantic ruby. It is his manner of acting, and you must take him as you find him." At this moment the bell rang to announce the drawing up of the curtain for the second act. Albert rose to return to his place. "Shall I see you again?" asked the countess. "If you will permit me to make a second

jewels threw an air of insignificance upon all the fair visitants of the theatre ; the business of the stage was utterly neglected—all seemed to consider the contemplation of so much loveliness far more deserving attention. Upon this occasion an unmistakable sign from Madame Danglars intimated her desire to see Albert in her box directly the curtain fell on the second act, and neither the politeness nor good taste of Morcerf would permit his neglecting an invitation so unequivocally given. At the close of the act he therefore proceeded to the baroness's *loge*. Having bowed to the two ladies, he extended his hand to Debray. By the baroness he was most graciously welcomed, while Eugénie received him with her accustomed coldness.

"My dear fellow !" said Debray, "you have just come in the very nick of time to help a fellow-creature regularly beaten and at a standstill. There is madame overwhelming me with questions respecting the count ; she insists upon it that I can tell her his birth, education, and parentage, where he came from, and whither he is going. Being no disciple of Cagliostro, I was wholly unable to do this ; so, by way of getting out of the scrape, I said, 'Ask Morcerf ; he has got the whole history of his beloved Monte-Cristo at his fingers' ends ;' whereupon the baroness made you a sign to come hither, and now I leave the solution of her questions in your hands."

"Is it not almost incredible," said Madame Danglars, "that a person having at least half a million of secret-service money at his command, should possess so little information upon so every-day a matter as the present?"—"Let me assure you, madame," said Lucien, "that had I really the sum you mention at my disposal, I would employ it more profitably than in troubling myself to obtain particulars respecting the Count of Monte-Cristo, whose only merit in my eyes consists in his being twice as rich as a nabob. However, I have turned the business over to Morcerf, so pray settle it with him as may be most agreeable to you ; for my own part, I care nothing about the count or his mysterious doings."

"I am very sure no nabob of our time would have sent me a pair of horses worth 32,000 francs, wearing on their heads four diamonds valued at 5,000 francs each."—"He seems to have a mania for diamonds," said Morcerf, smiling ; "and I verily believe that, like Potemkin, he keeps his pockets filled, for the sake of strewing them along the road, as little Thumb did his flint stones."

"Perhaps he has discovered some mine," said Madame Danglars. "I suppose you know he has an order for unlimited credit on the baron's banking establishment?"—"I was not aware of it," replied Albert, "but I can readily believe it."

"And, further, that he stated to M. Danglars his intention of only staying a year in Paris, during which time he proposed to spend six millions. He must be the Shah of Persia, travelling *incog*."

"Have you remarked the extreme beauty of that young female by whom he is accompanied, M. Lucien?" inquired Eugénie.

"I really never met with one woman so ready to do justice to the charms of another as yourself ; let us see how far she merits your praise," continued Lucien, raising his lorgnette to his eye. "A most lovely creature, upon my soul !" cried he, after a long and searching scrutiny.

"Who is this young person, M. Morcerf," inquired Eugénie ; "does anybody know?"

"Allow me to state," said Albert, replying to this direct appeal, "that I can give you very tolerable information on that subject, as well as on most

points relative to the singular person of whom we are now conversing—the young female is a Greek.”

“So I should presume by her dress; if, therefore, you know no more than that one self-evident fact, the whole of the spectators in the theatre are as well-informed as yourself.”

“I am extremely sorry you find me so ignorant a cicerone,” replied Morcerf, “but I am reluctantly obliged to confess, I have nothing further to communicate—yes, stay, I do know one thing more, namely, that she is a musician, for one day that I chanced to be breakfasting with the count, I heard the sound of a guzla—it is impossible it could have been touched by any other finger than her own.”——“Then your count entertains visitors, does he?” asked Madame Danglars.

“Indeed he does, and in a most noble manner, I can assure you.”

“I must try and persuade M. Danglars to invite him to a ball or dinner, or something of the sort, that he may be compelled to ask us in return.”

——“What!” said Debray, laughing; “do you really mean you would go to his house?”——“Why not? my husband could accompany me.”

“But do you know this mysterious count is a bachelor?”

“You have ample proof to the contrary, if you look opposite,” said the baroness, as she laughingly pointed to the beautiful Greek.

“No, no!” exclaimed Debray; “that female is not his wife, he told us himself she was his slave; do you not recollect, Morcerf, his telling us so at your breakfast?”

“Well, then,” said the baroness, “if slave she be, she has all the air and manner of a princess.”——“Of the Arabian Nights?”

“If you like; but tell me, my good Lucien, what is it that constitutes a princess? gold, silver, and jewels? and our Greek beauty there is one blaze of diamonds; I doubt if any queen’s could equal them.”

“To me she seems overloaded,” observed Eugénie; “she would look

"He will very probably come of his own accord," said Morcerf. "There! do you see, madame, he recognises you, and bows." The baroness returned the salute in the most smiling and graceful manner.

"Well," said Morcerf, "I may as well be magnanimous, and tear myself away to forward your wishes. Adieu; I will go and try if there are any means of speaking to him."—"Go straight to his box, that will be the simplest plan."

"But I have never been presented."

"Presented to whom?"—"To the beautiful Greek."

"You say she is only a slave?"—"While you assert that she is a queen, or at least a princess. No, no, I cannot venture to enter his box; but I hope, that when he observes me leave you, he will come and take my place."

"We shall see; it is just probable, therefore go at once."

"Adieu! I sacrifice myself, remember that," said Albert, as he made his parting bow. As he had predicted, just as he was passing the count's box, the door opened, and Monte-Cristo came forth. After giving some directions to Ali, who stood in the lobby, the count observed Albert, and, taking his arm, walked onwards with him. Carefully closing the box-door, Ali placed himself before it, while a crowd of wondering spectators assembled round the unconscious Nubian.

"Upon my word," said Monte-Cristo, "Paris is a strange city, and the Parisians a very singular people; do pray observe that cluster of persons collected round poor Ali, who is as much astonished as themselves; really one might suppose he was the only Nubian they had ever beheld; now I will pledge myself, that a Frenchman might show himself in public, either in Tunis, Constantinople, Bagdad, or Cairo, without drawing a circle of gazers around him."

"That shows that the Eastern nations have too much good sense to waste their time and attention on objects undeserving of either. However, as far as Ali is concerned, I can assure you, the interest he excites is merely from the circumstance of his being your attendant: you, who are at this moment the most celebrated and fashionable person in Paris."

"Really? and what has procured me so flattering a distinction?"

"What? why, yourself, to be sure! You give away horses worth a thousand guineas; you save the lives of ladies of high rank and beauty; you send thoroughbred racers to contest the prize of the Jockey Club, the horses being rode by tiny urchins not larger than marmots; then, when you have carried off the golden trophy of victory, instead of setting any value on it, you give it to the first handsome woman you think of!"

"And who has filled your head with all this nonsense?"

"Why, in the first place, I heard it from Madame Danglars, who, by the by, is dying to see you in her box, or to have you seen there by others; secondly, I learned it from Beauchamp's journal; and thirdly, from my own imagination. Why, if you sought concealment, did you call your horse Vampa?"—"That was an oversight, certainly," replied the count; "but tell me, does the count de Morcerf never visit the Opera? I have been looking for him, but without success."

"He will be here to-night."—"In what part of the house?"—"In the baroness's *loge*, I believe."—"Is the charming young female with her—her daughter?"—"Yes."—"Indeed! then I congratulate you." Morcerf smiled. "We will discuss that subject at length some future time," said he. "But what think you of the music?"—"What music?"

"That which you have just heard."—"Oh, it is admirable as the pro-

duction of a human composer, sung by a party of bipeds without feathers, as Diogenes styled mankind."—"Why, my dear count, would you have me understand that you undervalue our terrestrial harmony, because you can at pleasure enjoy the seraphic strains that proceed from the seven choirs of paradise?"—"You are right, in some degree; but when I wish to listen to sounds so exquisitely attuned to melody as mortal ear never yet listened to, I go to sleep."—"Then why not indulge yourself at once? Sleep, by all means, if such be your means of procuring the concord of celestial sounds. Pray do not hesitate; you will find every incentive to slumber, and for what else but to send people asleep, was the opera invented?"—"No, thank you. Your orchestra is rather too noisy to admit the soft wooing of the drowsy god. The sleep after the manner I have mentioned, and to produce the desired effects, absolute calm and silence are necessary, a certain preparation must also be called in aid."

"I know—the famous hatchis!"—"Precisely. Now you know my secret, let me recommend you, my dear viscount, to come and sup with me whenever you wish to be regaled with music really worth listening to."—"I have already enjoyed that treat when breakfasting with you," said Morcerf.

"Do you mean at Rome?"—"I do."

"Ah, then, I suppose you heard Haydée's guzla; the poor exile frequently beguiles a weary hour in playing over to me the airs of her native land." Morcerf did not pursue the subject, and Monte-Cristo himself fell into a silent reverie. The bell rang at this moment for the rising of the curtain. "You will excuse my leaving you," said the count, turning in the direction of his *loge*.—"What! Are you going?"

"Pray, say everything that is kind to Countess G—— on the part of her friend the Vampire."

"And what message shall I convey to the baroness?"

"That, with her permission, I propose doing myself the honour of paying

the one in which you kindly prevented my disappointment respecting the horses, you saved the life of my dear friend, Madame de Villefort, which I had placed in danger by lending her the very animals your generosity restored to me."—"This time, at least, I cannot accept of your flattering acknowledgments. In the latter affair you owe me nothing. Ali, my Nubian slave, was the fortunate individual who enjoyed the privilege of rendering to your friend the trifling assistance you allude to."

"Was it Ali," asked the count de Morcerf, "who rescued my son from the hands of bandits?"

"No, M. le Comte," replied Monte-Cristo, pressing with friendly warmth the hand held out to him by the general; "in this instance I may fairly and freely accept your thanks; but you have already tendered them, and fully discharged your debt—if, indeed, there existed one—and I feel almost mortified to find you still revert to the trifling aid I was able to render your son.—May I beg of you, Madame la Baronne, to honour me with an introduction to your charming daughter?"

"Oh! you are no stranger—at least not by name," replied Madame Danglars, "and the last two or three days we have really talked of nothing else but yourself. Eugénie," continued the baroness, turning towards her daughter, "M. le comte de Monte-Cristo." The count bowed, while Mademoiselle Danglars returned a slight inclination of the head. "You have a charming young person with you to-night, M. le Comte," said Eugénie. "Your daughter, I presume?"—"No, indeed," said Monte-Cristo, astonished at the coyness and freedom of the question. "The female you allude to is a poor unfortunate Greek left under my care."

"And what is her name?"—"Haydée," replied Monte-Cristo.—"A Greek?" murmured count de Morcerf.—"Yes, indeed, count," said Madame Danglars; "and tell me, did you ever see at the court of Ali Tebelin, whom you so gloriously and valiantly served, a more exquisite beauty or richer costume than is displayed in the fair Greek before us?"

"Did I hear rightly, M. le Comte," said Monte-Cristo, "that you served at Janina?"—"I was inspector-general of the pasha's troops," replied Morcerf; "and I seek not to conceal that I owe my fortune, such as it is, to the liberality of the illustrious Albanese chief."—"But look! pray look," exclaimed Madame Danglars.

"Where?" stammered out Morcerf.

"There, there!" said Monte-Cristo, as, wrapping his arms around the count, he leaned with him over the front of the box, just as Haydée, whose eyes were occupied in examining the theatre in search of the count, perceived his pale marble features close to the countenance of Morcerf, whom he was holding in his arms. This sight produced on the astonished girl an effect similar to that of the fabulous head of Medusa. She bent forwards as though to assure herself of the reality of what she beheld, then uttering a faint cry, threw herself back in her seat. The sound that burst from the agitated Greek quickly reached the ear of the watchful Ali, who instantly opened the box-door to ascertain the cause. "Bless me!" exclaimed Eugénie, "what has happened to your ward, M. le Comte? she seems taken suddenly ill!"

"Very probably!" answered the count. "But do not be alarmed on her account! Haydée's nervous system is delicately organised, and she is peculiarly susceptible of the odours even of flowers—nay, there are some which cause her to faint if brought into her presence. However," continued Monte-Cristo, drawing a small phial from his pocket, "I have an infallible remedy for such attacks." So saying, he bowed to the baroness

and her daughter, exchanged a parting shake of the hand with Debray and the count, and quitted for the box. Upon his return to Haydée, he found her extremely pale and much agitated. Directly she saw him she seized his hand, while the icy coldness of her own made Monte-Cristo start. "With whom was my lord conversing a few minutes since?" asked she, in a trembling voice.—"With the count de Morcerf," answered Monte-Cristo. "He tells me he served your illustrious father, and that he owes his fortune to him!"

"Base, cowardly traitor that he is!" exclaimed Haydée, her eyes flashing with rage; "he it was who sold my beloved parent to the Turks, and the fortune he boasts of was the price of his treachery! Knowest thou not that, my dear lord?"

"Something of this I heard in Epirus," said Monte-Cristo; "but the particulars are still unknown to me. You shall relate them to me, my child. They are, no doubt, both curious and interesting."

"Yes, yes! but let us go hence, I beseech you. I feel as though it would kill me to remain longer near that dreadful man." So saying, Haydée arose, and wrapping herself in her bournous of white cachemire embroidered with pearls and coral, she hastily quitted the box at the moment when the curtain was rising upon the fourth act.

"Do you observe," said the Countess G—— to Albert, who had returned to her side, "that man does nothing like other people; he listens most devoutly to the third act of *Robert le Diable*, and when the fourth begins, makes a precipitate retreat."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE STOCKS.

Cette fois, après cette réunion, Albert de Morcerf quitta le comte et



eye, and biting the top of his gold-headed cane, began to make the tour of the apartment, examining the arms and the pictures.

"Ah!" said Monte-Cristo, "I did not expect the affair would have been so promptly concluded."

"Oh, things take their course without our assistance: whilst we are forgetting them, they are falling into their appointed order; and when, again, our attention is directed to them, we are surprised at the progress they have made towards the proposed end. My father and M. Danglars served together in Spain, my father in the army and M. Danglars in the commissariat department. It was there that my father, ruined by the revolution, and M. Danglars, who never had possessed any patrimony, both laid the foundations of their different fortunes."—"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "I think M. Danglars mentioned that in a visit which I paid him; and," continued he, casting a side-glance at Lucien, who was turning over the leaves of an album, "is Mademoiselle Eugénie pretty—for I think I remember that to be her name?"—"Very pretty, or rather, very beautiful," replied Albert, "but of that style of beauty which I do not appreciate; I am an ungrateful fellow."—"You speak as if you were already her husband."

"Ah!" returned Albert, in his turn looking round to see what Lucien was doing.—"Really," said Monte-Cristo, lowering his voice, "you do not appear to me to be very enthusiastic on the subject of this marriage."—"Mademoiselle Danglars is too rich for me," replied Morcerf, "and that frightens me."—"Bah!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "that's a fine reason to give. Are you not rich yourself?"—"My father's income is about 50,000 francs per annum; and he will give me, perhaps, ten or twelve thousand when I marry."

"That, perhaps, might not be considered a large sum, in Paris especially," said the count; "but everything does not depend on wealth, and it is a fine thing to have a good name, and to occupy a high station in society. Your name is celebrated, your position magnificent; and then the count de Morcerf is a soldier, and it is pleasing to see the integrity of a Bayard united to the poverty of a Duguesclin: disinterestedness is the brightest ray in which a noble sword can shine. As for me, I consider the union with Mademoiselle Danglars a most suitable one; she will enrich you, and you will ennoble her." Albert shook his head, and looked thoughtful. "There is still something else," said he.—"I confess," observed Monte-Cristo, "that I have some difficulty in comprehending your objection to a young lady who is both rich and beautiful."

"Oh!" said Morcerf, "this repugnance, if repugnance it may be called, is not all on my side."—"Whence can it arise then? for you told me your father desired the marriage."

"My mother's is the dissenting voice; she has a clear and penetrating judgment, and does not smile on the proposed union. I cannot account for it, but she seems to entertain some prejudice against the Danglars."

"Ah!" said the count, in a somewhat forced tone, "that may be easily explained; Madame la comtesse de Morcerf, who is aristocracy and refinement itself, does not relish the idea of being allied by your marriage with one of ignoble birth; that is natural enough."

"I do not know if that is her reason," said Albert; "but one thing I do know, that if this marriage be consummated, it will render her quite miserable. There was to have been a meeting six weeks ago in order to talk over and settle the affair; but I had such a sudden attack of indisposition—" "Real?" interrupted the count, smiling.

"Oh, real enough, from anxiety doubtless, that they postponed the ren-

devious for two months longer. There is no hurry, you know. I am not yet twenty-one, and Eugénie is only seventeen years of age; but the two months expire next week. It must be done. My dear count, you cannot imagine how my mind is harassed. How happy you are in being exempted from all this!"—"Well! and why should not you be free too? What prevents you from being so?"

"Oh! it will be too great a disappointment to my father if I do not marry Mademoiselle Danglars."—"Marry her then," said the count, with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

"Yes," replied Morcerf, "but that will plunge my mother into positive grief."—"Then do not marry her," said the count.

"Well, I shall see. I will try and think over what is the best thing to be done; you will give me your advice, will you not? and if possible extricate me from my unpleasant position? I think, rather than give pain to my excellent mother, I would run the risk of offending the count." Monte-Cristo turned away; he seemed moved by this last remark. "Ah!" said he to Debray, who had thrown himself into an easy-chair at the farthest extremity of the salon, and who held a pencil in his right hand and an account book in his left, "what are you doing there? are you making a sketch after Poussin?"

"No, no! I am doing something of a very opposite nature to painting. I am engaged with arithmetic."—"Arithmetic!"

"Yes; I am calculating—by the way, Morcerf, that indirectly concerns you—I am calculating what the house of Danglars must have gained by the last rise in Haïti stock; from 206 they have risen to 409 in three days, and the prudent banker had purchased at 206, therefore he must have made 300,000 livres."

"That is not his best stroke of policy," said Morcerf; "did he not gain

character of the baronne—no one has any influence with her, and she does precisely what she pleases.”——“Ah, if I were in your place——” said Albert.

“Well?”——“I would reform her: it would be rendering a service to her future son-in-law.”——“How would you set about it?”

“Ah, that would be easy enough—I would give her a lesson.”

“A lesson?”——“Yes. Your position as secretary to the minister renders your authority great on the subject of political news; you never open your mouth but the stockbrokers immediately stenograph your words. Cause her to lose 2 or 300,000 francs in a short space of time, and that would teach her prudence.”——“I do not understand,” stammered Lucien.

“It is very clear, notwithstanding,” replied the young man, with a *naïveté* totally free from all affectation; “tell her some fine morning an unheard-of piece of intelligence—some telegraphic despatch, of which you alone are in possession; for instance, that Henri IV. was seen yesterday at the house of Gabrielle. That will cause the funds to rise; she will lay her plans accordingly, and she will certainly lose when Beauchamp announces the following day, in his gazette, ‘The report which has been circulated by some individuals, stating the king to have been seen yesterday at Gabrielle’s house, is totally without foundation. We can positively assert that his majesty did not quit the Pont-Neuf.’” Lucien half smiled. Monte-Cristo, although apparently indifferent, had not lost one word of this conversation, and his penetrating eye had even read a hidden secret in the embarrassed manner of the secretary. This embarrassment had completely escaped Albert, but it caused Lucien to shorten his visit; he was evidently ill at ease. The count, in taking leave of him, said something in a low voice, to which he answered, “Willingly, M. le Comte; I accept your proposal.” The count returned to young De Morcerf.

“Do you not think, on reflection,” said he to him, “that you have done wrong in thus speaking of your mother-in-law in the presence of M. Debray?”——“M. le Comte,” said Morcerf, “I beg of you not to apply that title so prematurely.”

“Now, speaking without any exaggeration, is your mother really so very much averse to this marriage?”——“So much so that the baronne very rarely comes to the house, and my mother has not, I think, visited Madame Danglars twice in her whole life.”

“Then,” said the count, “I am emboldened to speak openly to you. M. Danglars is my banker; M. de Villefort has overwhelmed me with politeness in return for a service which a casual piece of good fortune enabled me to render him. I predict from all this an avalanche of dinners and routs. Now, in order to appear not to expect such a proceeding, and also to be beforehand with them, if you like it, I have thought of inviting M. and Madame Danglars, and M. and Madame de Villefort, to my country-house at Autueil. If I were to invite you and the count and countess de Morcerf to this dinner, it would give it the air of a matrimonial rendezvous, or at least Madame de Morcerf would look upon the affair in that light, especially if M. le Baron Danglars did me the honour to bring his daughter. In that case your mother would hold me in aversion, and I do not at all wish that; on the contrary, I desire to occupy a prominent place in her esteem.”

“Indeed, count,” said Morcerf, “I thank you sincerely for having used so much candour towards me, and I gratefully accept the exclusion which you propose to me. You say you desire my mother’s good opinion; I assure you it is already yours to a very unusual extent.”

"Do you think so?" said Monte-Cristo, with interest.

"Oh, I am sure of it; we talked of you an hour after you left us the other day. But to return to what we were saying. If my mother could know of this attention on your part—and I will venture to tell her—I am sure that she will be most grateful to you; it is true that my father will be equally angry." The count laughed. "Well," said he to Morcerf, "but I think your father will not be the only angry one; M. and Madame Danglars will think me a very ill-mannered person. They know that I am intimate with you—that you are, in fact, one of the oldest of my Parisian acquaintances, and they will not find you at my house; they will certainly ask me why I did not invite you. Be sure to provide yourself with some previous engagement which shall have a semblance of probability, and communicate the fact to me by a line in writing. You know that with bankers nothing but a written document will be valid."

"I will do better than that," said Albert; "my mother is wishing to go to the sea-side—what day is fixed for your dinner?"

"Saturday."—"This is Tuesday—well, to-morrow evening we leave, and the day after we shall be at Tréport. Really, M. le Comte, you are a charming person to set people at their ease."

"Indeed, you give me more credit than I deserve; I only wish to do what will be agreeable to you, that is all."

"When shall you send your invitations?"

"This very day."—"Well, I will immediately call on M. Danglars, and tell him that my mother and myself leave Paris to-morrow. I have not seen you, consequently I know nothing of your dinner."

"How foolish you are! Have you forgotten that M. Debray has just seen you at my house?"—"Ah, true!"—"On the contrary, I have seen you, and invited you without any ceremony, when you instantly answered

tation to dinner, one might creditably make an excuse. I require the proof of a pre-engagement. I am not a banker, like M. Danglars, but I am quite as incredulous as he is."—"I am going to give you a proof," replied the count, and he rang the bell.

"Humph!" said Morcerf, "this is the second time you have refused to dine with my mother; it is evident you wish to avoid her." Monte-Cristo started. "Oh, you do not mean that," said he; "besides, here comes the confirmation of my assertion." Baptistin entered, and remained standing at the door. "I had no previous knowledge of your visit, had I?"

"Indeed, you are such an extraordinary person, that I would not answer for it."—"At all events, I could not guess that you would invite me to dinner?"—"Probably not."—"Well, listen; Baptistin, what did I tell you this morning when I called you into my laboratory?"—"To close the door against visitors as soon as the clock struck five," replied the valet.

"What then?"

"Ah, M. le Comte—" said Albert.—"No, no, I wish to do away with that mysterious reputation that you have given me, my dear viscount; it is tiresome to be always acting Manfred. I wish my life to be free and open. Go on, Baptistin."—"Then to admit no one except M. le Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti and his son."

"You hear; Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti; a man who ranks amongst the most ancient nobility of Italy, whose name Danté has celebrated in the tenth canto of '*L'Inferno*,' you remember it, do you not? Then there is his son, a charming young man, about your own age, viscount, bearing the same title as yourself, and who is making his *entrée* into the Parisian world, aided by his father's millions. The major will bring his son with him this evening, the *contino*, as we say in Italy; he confides him to my care. If he prove himself worthy of it, I will do what I can to advance his interests: you will assist me in the work, will you not?"

"Most undoubtedly! This Major Cavalcanti is an old friend of yours, then?"—"By no means. He is a perfect nobleman, very polite, modest, and agreeable, such as may be found constantly in Italy, descendants of very ancient families. I have met him several times at Florence, Bologna, and Lucca, and he has now communicated to me the fact of his arrival in this place. The acquaintances one makes in travelling have a sort of claim on one: they everywhere expect to receive the same attention which you once paid them by chance; as though the civilities of a passing hour were likely to awaken any lasting interest in favour of the man in whose society you may happen to be thrown in the course of your journey. This good Major Cavalcanti is come to take a second view of Paris, which he only saw in passing through in the time of the Empire, when he was on his way to Moscow. I shall give him a good dinner: he will confide his son to my care; I will promise to watch over him; I shall let him follow in whatever path his folly may lead him, and then I shall have done my part."

"Certainly; I see you are a precious Mentor," said Albert. "Good-bye, we shall return on Sunday. By the way, I have received news of Franz."

"Have you? Is he still amusing himself in Italy?"

"I believe so; however, he regrets your absence extremely. He says you were the sun of Rome, and that without you all appears dark and cloudy; I do not know if he does not even go so far as to say that it rains."—"His opinion of me is altered for the better, then?"—"No, he still persists in looking upon you as the most incomprehensible and mysterious of beings."—"He is a charming young man," said Monte-

"By the excellent Abbé Busoni?"

"Exactly so," said the delighted major.

"And you have a letter?"—"Yes, there it is."

"Give it me, then;" and Monte-Cristo took the letter, which he opened and read. The major looked at the count with his large staring eyes, and then took a survey of the apartment, but his gaze almost immediately reverted to the proprietor of the room. "Yes, yes, I see. 'Major Cavalcanti, a worthy patrician of Lucca, a descendant of the Cavalcanti, of Florence,'" continued Monte-Cristo, reading aloud, "'possessing an income of half a million.'" Monte-Cristo raised his eyes from the paper, and bowed. "Half a million," said he, "magnificent!"

"Half a million, is it?" said the major.

"Yes, in so many words; and it must be so, for the abbé knows correctly the amount of all the largest fortunes in Europe."

"Be it half a million, then; but on my word of honour, I had no idea that it was so much."—"Because you are robbed by your steward. You must make some reformation in that quarter."

"You have opened my eyes," said the Italian, gravely; "I will show the gentleman the door." Monte-Cristo resumed the perusal of the letter:—

"And who only needs one thing more to make him happy."—"Yes, indeed! but one!" said the major, with a sigh.—"Which is to recover a lost and adored son."—"A lost and adored son!"

"Stolen away in his infancy, either by an enemy of his noble family or by the gipsies."—"At the age of five years!" said the major with a deep sigh, and raising his eyes to heaven.

"Unhappy father!" said Monte-Cristo. The count continued:—

"I have given him renewed life and hope, in the assurance that you have the power of restoring the son whom he has so long sought for."

signature of the Abbé Busoni, I had not provided myself with any other funds ; so that if this resource had failed me, I should have found myself very unpleasantly situated in Paris."

"Is it possible that a man of your standing should be embarrassed anywhere?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Why, really I know no one," said the major.

"But then you yourself are known to others?"

"Yes, I am known, so that——" "Proceed, my dear M. Cavalcanti."

"So that you will remit to me these 48,000 francs?"

"Certainly, at your first request." The major's eyes dilated with pleasing astonishment. "But sit down," said Monte-Cristo ; "really I do not know what I have been thinking of—I have positively kept you standing for the last quarter of an hour." "Don't mention it." The major drew an arm-chair towards him, and proceeded to seat himself.

"Now," said the count, "what will you take—a glass of port, sherry, or vin d'Alicant?"

"Vin d'Alicant, if you please ; it is my favourite wine."

"I have some which is excellent. You will take a biscuit with it, will you not?" "Yes, I will take a biscuit, as you are so obliging."

Monte-Cristo rang ; Baptistin appeared. The count advanced to meet him. "Well?" said he, in a low voice. "The young man is here," said the valet-de-chambre, in the same tone.

"Into what room did you take him?"

"Into the blue drawing-room, according to your excellency's orders."

"That's right ; now bring the vin d'Alicant and some biscuits."

Baptistin left the room. "Really," said the major, "I am quite ashamed of the trouble I am giving you." "Pray don't mention such a thing," said the count. Baptistin re-entered with glasses, wine, and biscuits. The count filled one glass, but in the other he only poured a few drops of the ruby-coloured liquid. The bottle was covered with spiders' webs, and all the other signs which indicate the age of wine more truly than do wrinkles on the face of a man. The major made a wise choice ; he took the full glass and a biscuit. The count told Baptistin to leave the plate within reach of his guest, who began by sipping the Alicant with an expression of great satisfaction, and then delicately steeped his biscuit in the wine.

"So, sir, you inhabited Lucca, did you? You were rich, noble, held in great esteem—had all that could render a man happy?"

"All," said the major, hastily swallowing his biscuit, "positively all."

"And yet there was one thing wanting in order to complete your happiness?" "Only one thing," said the Italian.

"And that one thing, your lost child?" "Ah," said the major, taking a second biscuit, "that consummation of my happiness was indeed wanting." The worthy major raised his eyes to heaven and sighed.

"Let me hear, then," said the count, "who this deeply-regretted son was ; for I always understood you were a bachelor."

"That was the general opinion, sir," said the major, "and I——"

"Yes," replied the count, "and you confirmed the report. A youthful indiscretion, I suppose, which you were anxious to conceal from the world at large?" The major recovered himself, and resumed his usual calm manner, at the same time casting his eyes down, either to give himself time to compose his countenance, or to assist his imagination, all the while giving an under-look at the count, the protracted smile on whose lips still announced the same polite curiosity. "Yes," said the major, "I did wish this fault to be hidden from every eye."

"Not on your own account, surely," replied Monte-Cristo; "for a man is above all these things?"—"Oh, no, certainly not on my own account," said the major, with a smile and a shake of the head.

"But for the sake of the mother?" said the count.—"Yes, for the mother's sake—his poor mother!" cried the major, taking a third biscuit.

"Take some more wine, my dear Cavalcanti," said the count, pouring out for him a second glass of Alicant; "your emotion has quite overcome you."—"His poor mother!" murmured the major, trying if the will was powerful enough to act on the lachrymal gland, so as to moisten the corner of his eye with a false tear.

"She belonged to one of the first families in Italy, I think, did she not?"

"She was of a noble family of Fiesole, M. le Comte."

"And her name was——"

"Do you desire to know her name——?"

"Oh," said Monte-Cristo, "it would be quite superfluous for you to tell me, for I already know it."

"M. le Comte knows everything," said the Italian, bowing.

"Oliva Corsinari, was it not?"—"Oliva Corsinari!"

"A marchioness?"—"A marchioness!"—"And you married her at last, notwithstanding the opposition of her family?"

"Yes, I did so."—"And you have doubtless brought all your papers with you?" said Monte-Cristo.

"What papers?"—"The certificate of your marriage with Oliva Corsinari, and the register of your child's birth."

"The register of my child's birth?"—"The register of the birth of Andrea Cavalcanti—of your son; is not his name Andrea?"

"I believe so," said the major.

"What! you are not sure that is his name!"

"I dare not positively assert it, as he has been lost for so long a time."

deed, that is a fortunate circumstance ; yes, that really is lucky, for it never occurred to me to bring them.”——“ I do not at all wonder at it—one cannot think of everything ; but, happily, the Abbé Busoni thought for you.”

“ He is an excellent person ! ”

“ He is extremely prudent and thoughtful.”

“ He is an admirable man,” said the major ; “ and he sent them to you ? ”

“ Here they are.”

The major clasped his hands in token of admiration. “ You married Oliva Corsinari in the church of San Paolo del Monte-Cattini ; here is the priest’s certificate.”

“ Yes, indeed, there it is truly,” said the Italian, looking on with astonishment. “ And here is Andrea Cavalcanti’s baptismal register, given by the curé of Saravezza.”

“ All quite correct.”——“ Take these documents, then ; they do not concern me. You will give them to your son, who will, of course, take great care of them.”

“ I should think so, indeed ! If he were to lose them——”

“ Well, and if he were to lose them ? ” said Monte-Cristo.

“ In that case,” replied the major, “ it would be necessary to write to the curé for duplicates, and it would be some time before they could be obtained.”

“ It would be a difficult matter to arrange,” said Monte-Cristo.

“ Almost an impossibility,” replied the major.

“ I am very glad to see that you understand the value of these papers.”

“ I regard them as invaluable.”

“ Now,” said Monte-Cristo, “ as to the mother of the young man——”

“ As to the mother of the young man——” repeated the Italian, with anxiety.——“ As regards la Marquise Corsinari——”

“ Really,” said the major, “ difficulties seem to thicken upon us ; will she be wanted in any way ? ”

“ No, sir,” replied Monte-Cristo ; “ besides, has she not——”

“ Yes, yes,” said the major, “ she has——”

“ Paid the last debt of nature ? ”——“ Alas ! yes,” returned the Italian.

“ I knew that,” said Monte-Cristo ; “ she has been dead these ten years.”

“ And I am still mourning her loss ! ” exclaimed the major, drawing from his pocket a checked handkerchief, and alternately wiping first the right and then the left eye.

“ What would you have ? ” said Monte-Cristo ; “ we are all mortal. Now, you understand, my dear M. Cavalcanti, that it is useless for you to tell people in France that you have been separated from your son for fifteen years. Stories of gipsies, who steal children, are not at all in vogue in this part of the world, and would not be believed. You sent him for his education to a college in one of the provinces, and now you wish him to complete his education in the Parisian world. That is the reason which has induced you to leave Via Reggio, where you have lived since the death of your wife. That will be sufficient.”

“ You think so ? ”——“ Certainly.”

“ Very well, then.”——“ If they should hear of the separation——”

“ Ah, yes ; what could I say ? ”——“ That an unfaithful tutor, bought over by the enemies of your family——”

“ By the Corsinari ? ”——“ Precisely. Had stolen away this child, in order that your name might become extinct.”

“ That will do well, since he is an only son.”——“ Well, now that all is arranged, do not let these newly-awakened remembrances be forgotten.”

You have, doubtless, already guessed that I was preparing a surprise for you?"—"An agreeable one?" asked the Italian.

"Ah, I see the eye of a father is no more to be deceived than his heart."

"Hum!" said the major.

"Some one has told you the secret; or, perhaps, you guessed that he was here."—"That who was here?"

"Your child—your son—your Andrea!"—"I did guess it," replied the major, with the greatest *sang froid* possible. "Then he is here?"

"He is," said Monte-Cristo; "when the valet-de-chambre came in just now, he told me of his arrival."—"Ah, very well, very well!" said the major, clutching the buttons of his coat at each exclamation which he made.

"My dear sir," said Monte-Cristo, "I understand all your emotion; you must have time to recover yourself. I will, in the meantime, go and prepare the young man for this much-desired interview, for I presume that he is not less impatient for it than yourself."

"I should quite imagine that to be the case," said Cavalcanti.

"Well, in a quarter of an hour he shall be with you."

"You will bring him, then? You carry your goodness so far as even to present him to me yourself!"

"No; I do not wish to come between a father and son. Your interview will be private. But do not be uneasy; even if the powerful voice of nature should be silent, you cannot well mistake him; he will enter by this door. He is a fine young man, of fair complexion—a little too fair, perhaps—pleasing manners; but you will see and judge for yourself."

"By the way," said the major, "you know I have only the 2,000 francs which the Abbé Busoni sent me; this sum I have expended upon travelling expenses, and——"

one's self with so many things? Besides, an old soldier always likes to march with as little baggage as possible."

"That is just the case—precisely so!"—"But you are a man of foresight and prudence, therefore you sent your luggage on before you. It has arrived at the Hôtel des Princes, Rue de Richelieu. It is there you are to take up your quarters."

"Then, in these trunks——"

"I presume you have given orders to your valet-de-chambre to put in all you are likely to need,—your plain clothes and your uniform. On grand occasions you must wear your uniform; that will look very well. Do not forget your crosses. They still laugh at them in France, and yet always wear them, for all that."

"Very well! very well!" said the major, who was in ecstasy at the attention paid him by the count.—"Now," said Monte-Cristo, "that you have fortified yourself against all painful excitement, prepare yourself, my dear M. Cavalcanti, to meet your lost Andrea." Saying which Monte-Cristo bowed, and disappeared behind the tapestry, leaving the major fascinated beyond expression with the delightful reception which the count had given him.

CHAPTER LVI.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI.

THE Count of Monte-Cristo entered the adjoining room, which Baptistin had designated as the blue drawing-room, and found there a young man, of graceful demeanour and elegant appearance, who had arrived in a *fiacre* about half an hour previously. Baptistin had not found any difficulty in recognising the individual who presented himself at the door for admittance. He was certainly the tall young man with light hair, red beard, black eyes, and brilliant complexion, whom his master had so particularly described to him. When the count entered the room the young man was carelessly stretched on a sofa, tapping his boot with the gold-headed cane which he held in his hand. On perceiving the count he rose quickly. "The Count of Monte-Cristo, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir, and I think I have the honour of addressing M. le Comte Andrea Cavalcanti?"—"Count Andrea Cavalcanti," repeated the young man, accompanying his words with a bow.

"You are charged with a letter of introduction addressed to me, are you not?" said the count.—"I did not mention that, because the signature seemed to me so strange."

"The letter signed 'Sinbad the Sailor,' is it not?"

"Exactly so. Now, as I have never known any Sinbad, with the exception of the one celebrated in the 'Thousand and One Nights'——"

"Well! it is one of his descendants, and a great friend of mine; he is a very rich Englishman, eccentric almost to insanity; and his real name is Lord Wilmore."—"Ah! indeed! then that explains everything," said Andrea, "that is extraordinary. He is, then, the same Englishman whom I met—at—yes, very well! M. le Comte, I am at your service."

"If what you say be true," replied the count, smiling, "perhaps you will be kind enough to give me some account of yourself and your family?"—"Certainly, I will do so," said the young man, with a quickness which gave proof of his ready invention. "I am (as you have said) the Count Andrea Cavalcanti, son of Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, a descendant of the Cavalcanti whose names are inscribed in the golden book at Florence."

Our family, although still rich (for my father's income amounts to half a million), has experienced many misfortunes, and I myself was, at the age of five years, taken away by the treachery of my tutor, so that for fifteen years I have not seen the author of my existence. Since I have arrived at years of discretion and become my own master, I have been constantly seeking him, but all in vain. At length I received this letter from your friend, which states that my father is in Paris, and authorises me to address myself to you for information respecting him."

"Really, all you have related to me is exceedingly interesting," said Monte-Cristo, observing the young man with a gloomy satisfaction; "and you have done well to conform in everything to the wishes of my friend Sinbad; for your father is indeed here, and is seeking you."

The count, from the moment of his first entering the drawing-room, had not once lost sight of the expression of the young man's countenance; he had admired the assurance of his look and the firmness of his voice; but at these words, so natural in themselves, "Your father is indeed here, and is seeking you," young Andrea started, and exclaimed, "My father! is my father here?"—"Most undoubtedly," replied Monte-Cristo; "your father, the Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti." The expression of terror which, for the moment, had overspread the features of the young man, had now disappeared. "Ah! yes, that is the name, certainly. Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti. And you really mean to say, M. le Comte, that my dear father is here?"

"Yes, sir; and I can even add that I have only just left his company. The history which he related to me of his lost son touched me to the quick; indeed, his griefs, hopes, and fears, on that subject might furnish material for a most touching and pathetic poem. At length, he one day received a letter, stating that the parties who had deprived him of his son,

weakened by want of culture ; and, in short, whether you consider yourself capable of resuming and retaining in the world the high position to which your rank entitles you."

"Sir," exclaimed the young man, quite astounded, "I hope no false report—"

"As for myself, I first heard you spoken of by my friend Wilmore, the philanthropist. I believe he found you in some unpleasant position, but do not know of what nature, for I did not ask, not being inquisitive. Your misfortunes engaged his sympathies ; so you see you must have been interesting. He told me that he was anxious to restore you to the position which you had lost, and that he would seek your father until he found him. He did seek, and has found him, apparently, since he is here now ; and, finally, my friend apprized me of your coming, and gave me a few other instructions relative to your future fortune. I am quite aware that my friend Wilmore is an original, but he is sincere, and as rich as a gold-mine ; consequently, he may indulge his eccentricities without any fear of their ruining him, and I have promised to adhere to his instructions. Now, sir, pray do not be offended at the question I am about to put to you, as it comes in the way of my duty as your patron. I would wish to know if the misfortunes which have happened to you—misfortunes entirely beyond your control, and which in no degree diminish my regard for you—I would wish to know if they have not, in some measure, contributed to render you a stranger to the world in which your fortune and your name entitle you to make a conspicuous figure ?"

"Sir," returned the young man, with a reassurance of manner, "make your mind easy on this score. Those who took me from my father, and who always intended, sooner or later, to sell me again to my original proprietor, as they have now done, calculated that, in order to make the most of their bargain, it would be politic to leave me in possession of all my personal and hereditary worth, and even to increase the value, if possible. I have, therefore, received a very good education, and have been treated by these kidnappers very much as the slaves were treated in Asia Minor, whose masters made them grammarians, doctors, and philosophers, in order that they might fetch a higher price in the Roman market." Monte-Cristo smiled with satisfaction ; it appeared as if he had not expected so much from M. Andrea Cavalcanti. "Besides," continued the young man, "if there did appear some defect in education, or offence against the established forms of etiquette, I suppose they would be excused, in consideration of the misfortunes which accompanied my birth, and followed me through my youth."

"Well," said Monte-Cristo, in an indifferent tone, "you will do as you please, count, for you are the master of your own actions, and are the person most concerned in the matter ; but if I were you, I would not divulge a word of these adventures. Your history is quite a romance, and the world, which delights in romances contained in two covers of yellow paper, strangely mistrusts those which are bound in living parchment, even though they be gilded like yourself. This is the kind of difficulty which I wished to represent to you, M. le Comte. You would hardly have recited your touching history than it would go forth to the world, and be deemed unlikely and unnatural. You would be no longer a lost child found, but you would be looked upon as an upstart, who had sprung up like a mushroom in the night. You might excite a little curiosity, but it is not every one who likes to be made the centre of observation and the subject of unpleasant remark."—"I agree with you, M. le Comte," said the young

man, turning pale, and, in spite of himself, trembling beneath the scrutinizing look of his companion, "such consequences would be extremely unpleasant."

"Nevertheless, you must not exaggerate the evil," said Monte-Cristo, "or by endeavouring to avoid one fault you will fall into another. You must resolve upon one simple and single line of conduct ; and for a man of your intelligence, this plan is as easy as it is necessary ; you must form honourable friendships, and by that means counteract the prejudice which may attach to the obscurity of your former life." Andrea visibly changed countenance. "I would offer myself as your surety and friendly adviser," said Monte-Cristo, "did I not possess a moral distrust of my best friends, and a sort of inclination to lead others to doubt them too ; therefore, in departing from this rule, I should (as the actors say) be playing a part quite out of my line, and should, therefore, run the risk of being hissed, which would be an act of folly."—"However, M. le Comte," said Andrea, "in consideration of Lord Wilmore, by whom I was recommended to you——"

"Yes, certainly," interrupted Monte-Cristo ; "but Lord Wilmore did not omit to inform me, my dear M. Andrea, that the season of your youth was rather a stormy one. Ah !" said the count, watching Andrea's countenance, "I do not demand any confession from you ; it is precisely to avoid that necessity that your father was sent for from Lucca. You shall soon see him ; he is a little stiff and pompous in his manner, and he is disfigured by his uniform ; but when it becomes known that he is in the Austrian service, all that will be pardoned. We are not generally very severe with the Austrians. In short, you will find your father a very presentable person, I assure you."

"Ah, sir, you have given me confidence ; it is so long since we were

young friend, where you will find your father awaiting you." Andrea made a low bow to the count, and entered the adjoining room. Monte-Cristo watched him till he disappeared, and then touched a spring made to look like a picture, which, in sliding partially from the frame, discovered to view a small interstice, which was so cleverly contrived that it revealed all that was passing in the drawing-room now occupied by Cavalcanti and Andrea. The young man closed the door behind him, and advanced towards the major, who had risen when he heard steps approaching him. "Ah ! my dear father !" said Andrea in a loud voice, in order that the count might hear him in the next room, "is it really you ?"—"How do you do, my dear son ?" said the major gravely.

"After so many years of painful separation," said Andrea, in the same tone of voice, and glancing towards the door, "what a happiness it is to meet again !"—"Indeed it is, after so long a separation."

"Will you not embrace me, sir ?" said Andrea.

"If you wish it, my son," said the major ; and the two men embraced each other after the fashion of actors on the stage ; that is to say, each rested his head on the other's shoulder.

"Then we are once more reunited ?" said Andrea.

"Once more !" replied the major.

"Never more to be separated ?"

"Why, as to that—I think, my dear son, you must be by this time so accustomed to France as to look upon it almost as a second country."

"The fact is," said the young man, "that I should be exceedingly grieved to leave it."

"As for me, you must know I cannot possibly live out of Lucca ; therefore I shall return to Italy as soon as I can."—"But before you leave France, my dear father, I hope you will put me in possession of the documents which will be necessary to prove my descent."

"Certainly, I am come expressly on that account ; it has cost me much trouble to find you, but I had resolved on giving them into your hands ; and if I had to recommence my search, it would occupy all the few remaining years of my life."

"Where are these papers, then ?"—"Here they are."

Andrea seized the certificate of his father's marriage and his own baptismal register, and after having opened them with all the eagerness which might be expected under the circumstances, he read them with a facility which proved that he was accustomed to similar documents, and with an expression which plainly denoted an unusual interest in the contents. When he had perused the documents, an indefinable expression of pleasure lighted up his countenance, and looking at the major with a most peculiar smile, he said, in very excellent Tuscan,—"Then there is no longer any such thing in Italy as being condemned to the galleys ?" The major drew himself up to his full height.

"Why ?—what do you mean by that question ?"

"I mean that if there were, it would be impossible to draw up with impunity two such deeds as these. In France, my dear sir, half such a piece of effrontery as that would cause you to be quickly despatched to Toulon for five years, for change of air."—"Will you be good enough to explain your meaning ?" said the major, endeavouring as much as possible to assume an air of the greatest majesty.

"My dear M. Cavalcanti," said Andrea, taking the major by the arm in a confidential manner, "how much are you paid for being my father ?" The major was about to speak, when Andrea continued, in a low voice,—

"Nonsense ! I am going to set you an example of confidence ; they give me 50,000 francs a year to be your son ; consequently, you can understand that it is not at all likely I shall ever deny my parent." The major looked anxiously around him. "Make yourself easy, we are quite alone," said Andrea ; "besides, we are conversing in Italian."—"Well, then," replied the major, "they paid me 50,000 francs down."

"Monsieur Cavalcanti," said Andrea, "do you believe in fairy tales ?"

"I used not to do so, but I really feel now almost obliged to have faith in them."—"You have, then, been induced to alter your opinion ; you have had some proofs of their truth ?" The major drew from his pocket a handful of gold. "Most palpable proofs," said he, "as you may perceive." "You think, then, that I may rely on the count's promises ?"—"Certainly I do."—"You are sure he will keep his word with me ?"—"To the letter ; but at the same time, remember, we must continue to play our respective parts. I, as a tender father—"

"And I as a dutiful son, as they choose that I shall be descended from you."—"Who do you mean by they ?"

"*Ma foi !* I can hardly tell, but I was alluding to those who wrote the letter ; you received one, did you not ?"—"Yes."

"From whom ?"—"From a certain Abbé Busoni."

"Have you any knowledge of him ?"

"No, I have never seen him."

"What did he say in the letter ?"

"You will promise not to betray me ?"

"Rest assured of that ; you well know that our interests are the same."

"Then read for yourself ;" and the major gave a letter into the young man's hand. Andrea read in a low voice :—

"You are poor : a miserable old age awaits you. Would you like to

"You are poor, and your future prospects are dark and gloomy. Do you wish for a name? should you like to be rich, and your own master?"

"*Ma foi!*" said the young man; "was it possible there could be two answers to such a question?"

"Take the post-chaise which you will find waiting at the Porte de Gènes, as you enter Nice; pass through Turin, Chambéry, and Pont-de-Beauvoisin. Go to the count of Monte-Cristo, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, on the 26th of May, at seven o'clock in the evening, and demand of him your father. You are the son of the Marquis Cavalcanti and the Marquise Oliva Corsinari. The marquis will give you some papers which will certify this fact, and authorise you to appear under that name in the Parisian world. As to your rank, an annual income of 50,000 livres will enable you to support it admirably. I enclose a draft for 5,000 livres, payable on M. Ferrea, banker at Nice, and also a letter of introduction to the count of Monte-Cristo, whom I have directed to supply all your wants."

"SINBAD THE SAILOR."

"Humph!" said the major; "very good! You have seen the count, you say?"—"I have only just left him."

"And has he conformed to all which the letter specified?"

"He has."—"Do you understand it?"

"Not in the least."—"There is a dupe somewhere."

"At all events, it is neither you nor I."

"Certainly not."—"Well then—"

"Why it does not much concern us; do you think it does?"

"No! I agree with you there; we must play the game to the end, and consent to be blindfold."—"Ah! you shall see; I promise you I will sustain my part to admiration."

"I never once doubted your doing so." Monte-Cristo chose this moment for re-entering the drawing-room. On hearing the sound of his footsteps, the two men threw themselves in each other's arms; and, in the midst of this embrace, the count entered. "Well, marquis," said Monte-Cristo, "you appear to be in no way disappointed in the son whom your good fortune has restored to you."—"Ah! M. le Comte, I am overwhelmed with delight."

"And what are your feelings?" said Monte-Cristo, turning to the young man.—"As for me, my heart is overflowing with happiness."

"Happy father! happy son!" said the count.—"There is only one thing which grieves me," observed the major, "and that is the necessity there is for my leaving Paris so soon."—"Ah! my dear M. Cavalcanti, I trust you will not leave before I have had the honour of presenting you to some of my friends."

"I am at your service, sir," replied the major.

"Now, sir," said Monte-Cristo, addressing Andrea, "make your confession."—"To whom?"

"Tell M. Cavalcanti something of the state of your finances."

"*Ma foi!* M. le Comte, you have touched upon a tender chord."

"Do you hear what he says, major?"—"Certainly I do."

"But do you understand?"—"I do."

"Your son says he requires money."

"Well! what would you have me do?" said the major.

"You should furnish him with some, of course," replied Monte-Cristo.

"I?"—"Yes, you!" said the count, at the same time advancing to-

wards Andrea, and slipping a packet of bank-notes into the young man's hand.

"What is this?"—"It is from your father."

"From my father?"—"Yes; did you not tell him just now that you wanted money? Well, then, he deposes me to give you this."

"Am I to consider this as part of my income on account?"

"No! it is for the first expenses of your settling in Paris."

"Ah! how good my dear father is!"

"Silence!" said Monte-Cristo; "he does not wish you to know that it comes from him."—"I fully appreciate his delicacy," said Andrea, cramming the notes hastily into his pocket.

"And now, gentlemen, I wish you good morning," said Monte-Cristo.

"And when shall we have the honour of seeing you again, M. le Comte?" asked Cavalcanti.

"Ah!" said Andrea, "when may we hope for that pleasure?"

"On Saturday, if you will—yes.—Let me see—Saturday—I am to dine at my country-house, at Auteuil, on that day, Rue la Fontaine, No. 28. Several persons are invited, and amongst others, M. Danglars, your banker. I will introduce you to him; for it will be necessary he should know you, as he is to pay your money."

"Full dress?" said the major, half aloud.

"Oh! yes, certainly," said the count; "uniform, cross, &c. &c."

"And how shall I be dressed?" demanded Andrea.

"Oh! very simply; black trousers, polished boots, white waistcoat, either a black or blue coat, and a long cravat. Go to Blin or Veronique for your dress. Baptistin will tell you where they live, if you do not know where to address them. The less pretension there is in your dress, the better will be the effect, as you are a rich man. If you mean to buy any

fail in her promise to Maximilian, she proposed to Mademoiselle Danglars that they should take a walk in the garden, being anxious to show that the delay, which was doubtless a cause of vexation to him, was not occasioned by any neglect on her part. The young man, with the intuitive perception of a lover, quickly understood the circumstances in which she was involuntarily placed, and he was comforted. Besides, although she avoided coming within speaking distance, Valentine arranged so that Maximilian could see her pass and repass; and each time she did so, she managed, unperceived by her companion, to cast an expressive look at the young man, which seemed to say, "Have patience! You see it is not my fault." And Maximilian was patient, and employed himself in mentally contrasting the two girls,—one fair, with soft languishing eyes, a figure gracefully bending like a weeping willow; the other a brunette, with a fierce and haughty expression, and as upright as a poplar. It is unnecessary to state that, in the eyes of the young man, Valentine did not suffer by the contrast. In the space of about half an hour the ladies retired, and Maximilian understood that Mademoiselle Danglars' visit had at last come to a conclusion. In a few minutes Valentine re-entered the garden alone. For fear that any one should be observing her return, she walked slowly; and instead of immediately directing her steps towards the gate, she seated herself on a bank, and carefully casting her eyes around, to convince herself that she was not watched, she presently rose, and proceeded quickly to join Maximilian.

"Good evening, Valentine," said a well-known voice.—"Good evening, Maximilian; I know I have kept you waiting, but you saw the cause of my delay."—"Yes, I recognised Mademoiselle Danglars. I was not aware that you were so intimate with her."—"Who told you we were intimate, Maximilian?"

"No one, but you appeared to be so; from the manner in which you walked and talked together, one would have thought you were two school-girls telling your secrets to each other."—"We were having a confidential conversation," returned Valentine; "she was owing to me her repugnance to the marriage with M. de Morcerf; and I, on the other hand, was confessing to her how wretched it made me to think of marrying M. d'Epinay."

"Dear Valentine!"—"That will account to you for the unreserved manner which you observed between me and Eugénie; as in speaking of the man whom I could not love, my thoughts involuntarily reverted to him on whom my affections were fixed."

"Ah, how good you are to say so, Valentine! You possess a quality which can never belong to Mademoiselle Danglars! It is that indefinable charm which is to a woman what perfume is to the flower and flavour to the fruit; for the beauty of either is not the only quality we seek."—"It is your love which makes you look upon everything in that light."

"No, Valentine, I assure you such is not the case. I was observing you both when you were walking in the garden, and, on my honour, without at all wishing to depreciate the beauty of Mademoiselle Danglars, I cannot understand how any man can really love her."—"The fact is, Maximilian, that I was there, and my presence had the effect of rendering you unjust in your comparison."

"No; but tell me—it is a question of simple curiosity, and which was suggested by certain ideas passing in my mind relative to Mademoiselle Danglars—"

"I dare say it is something disparaging which you are going to say. It

only proves how little indulgence we may expect from your sex," interrupted Valentine.—"You cannot, at least, deny that you are very harsh judges of each other."

"If we are so, it is because we generally judge under the influence of excitement. But return to your question."—"Does Mademoiselle Danglars object to this marriage with M. de Morcerf on account of loving another?"

"I told you I was not on terms of strict intimacy with Eugénie."

"Yes, but girls tell each other secrets without being particularly intimate: own, now, that you did question her on the subject. Ah! I see you are smiling."—"If you are already aware of the conversation that passed, the wooden partition which interposed between us and you has proved but a slight security."

"Come, what did she say?"—"She told me that she loved no one," said Valentine; "that she disliked the idea of being married; that she would infinitely prefer leading an independent and unfettered life; and that she almost wished her father might lose his fortune, that she might become an artist, like her friend, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly."

"Ah, you see—"

"Well, what does that prove?" asked Valentine.—"Nothing," replied Maximilian.—"Then why did you smile?"

"Why, you yourself had your eyes fixed on me."

"Do you wish me to go?"—"Ah, no, no! But do not let us lose time: you are the subject on which I would wish to speak."

"True, we must be quick, for we have scarcely ten minutes more to pass together."—"Ma foi!" said Maximilian, in consternation.

"Yes, you are right; I am but a poor friend to you. What a life I cause you to lead, poor Maximilian, you who are formed for happiness! I

leaned against the gate for support. "Can it really be true, and is that why Madame de Villefort has sent for me? No, that cannot be the case, for the communication would not be likely to come through her instrumentality."—"Why not?"

"Because—I scarcely know why—but it has appeared as if Madame de Villefort secretly objected to the marriage, although she did not choose openly to oppose it."—"Is it so? Then I feel as if I could adore Madame de Villefort."

"Do not be in such a hurry to do that," said Valentine, with a sad smile.

"If she objects to your marrying M. d'Epinay, she would be all the more likely to listen to any other proposition."—"No, Maximilian, it is not suitors to which Madame de Villefort objects, it is marriage itself."

"Marriage! if she dislikes that so much, why did she ever marry herself?"—"You do not understand me, Maximilian. About a year ago, I talked of retiring to a convent: Madame de Villefort, in spite of all the remarks which she considered it her duty to make, secretly approved of the proposition; my father consented to it, at her instigation, and it was only on account of my poor grandfather that I finally abandoned the project. You can form no idea of the expression of that old man's eye when he looks at me, the only person in the world whom he loves, and, I had almost said, by whom he is beloved in return. When he learned my resolution, I shall never forget the reproachful look which he cast on me, and the tears of utter despair which chased each other down his lifeless cheeks. Ah, Maximilian, I experienced, at that moment, such remorse for my intention, that, throwing myself at his feet, I exclaimed,—'Forgive me, pray forgive me, my dear grandfather; they may do what they will with me, I will never leave you.' When I had ceased speaking, he thankfully raised his eyes to heaven, but without uttering a word. Ah, Maximilian! I may have much to suffer, but I feel as if my grandfather's look at that moment would more than compensate for all."

"Dear Valentine, you are a perfect angel; and I am sure I do not know what I can have done to merit your being revealed to me. But tell me what interest Madame de Villefort can have in your remaining unmarried?"—"Did I not tell you just now that I was rich, Maximilian—too rich? I possess nearly 50,000 livres in right of my mother; my grandfather and my grandmother, the Marquis and Marquise de St. Méran, will leave me as much more: and M. Noirtier evidently intends making me his heir. My brother Edward, who inherits nothing from his mother, will, therefore, be poor in comparison with me. Now, if I had taken the veil, all this fortune would have descended to my father, and, in reversion, to his son."

"Ah! how strange it seems that such a young and beautiful woman should be so avaricious."—"It is not for herself that she is so, but for her son; and what you regard as a vice becomes almost a virtue when looked at in the light of maternal love."

"But could you not compromise matters, and give up a portion of your fortune to her son?"—"How could I make such a proposition, especially to a woman who always professes to be so entirely disinterested?"

"Valentine, I have always regarded our love in the light of something sacred; consequently, I have covered it with the veil of respect, and hid it in the inmost recesses of my soul; no human being, not even my sister, is aware

of its existence. Valentine, will you permit me to make a confidant of a friend, and reveal to him the love I bear you?"

Valentine started. "A friend, Maximilian; and who is this friend? I tremble to give my permission."—"Listen, Valentine. Have you never experienced for any one that sudden and irresistible sympathy which made you feel as if the object of it had been your old and familiar friend, though, in reality, it was the first time you had ever met? Nay, further, have you never endeavoured to recall the time, place, and circumstances of your former intercourse; and failing in this attempt, have almost believed that your spirits must have held converse with each other in some state of being anterior to the present, and that you are only now occupied in a reminiscence of the past?"

"Yes."—"Well, that is precisely the feeling which I experienced when I first saw that extraordinary man."

"Extraordinary, did you say?"—"Yes."

"You have known him for some time, then?"

"Scarcely longer than eight or ten days."

"And do you call a man your friend whom you have only known for eight or ten days? Ah, Maximilian, I had hoped you set a higher value on the title of friend."—"Your logic is most powerful, Valentine; but say what you will, I can never renounce the sentiment which has instinctively taken possession of my mind. I feel as if it were ordained that this man should be associated with all the good which the future may have in store for me; and sometimes it really seems as if his eye was able to see what was to come, and his hand endowed with the power of directing events according to his own will."

"He must be a prophet, then," said Valentine, smiling.

"Indeed!" said Maximilian, "I have often been almost tempted to at-

men and things. I never saw more simple tastes united to greater magnificence. His smile is so sweet when he addresses me, that I forget it can ever be bitter to others. Ah ! Valentine, tell me, if he ever looked on you with one of those sweet smiles ? if so, depend on it, you will be happy."

"Me !" said the young girl, "he never even glances at me ; on the contrary, if I accidentally cross his path, he appears rather to avoid me. Ah, he is not generous, neither does he possess that supernatural penetration which you attribute to him ; for if he had, he would have perceived that I was unhappy ; and if he had been generous, seeing me sad and solitary, he would have used his influence to my advantage ; and since, as you say, he resembles the sun, he would have warmed my heart with one of his life-giving rays. You say he loves you, Maximilian ; how do you know that he does ? All would pay deference to an officer like you, with a fierce moustache and a long sabre ; but they think they may crush a poor weeping girl with impunity."

"Ah, Valentine ! I assure you you are mistaken."

"If it were otherwise—if he treated me diplomatically—that is to say, like a man who wishes, by some means or other, to obtain a footing in the house, so that he may ultimately gain the power of dictating to its occupants—he would, if it had been but once, have honoured me with the smile which you extol so loudly ; but no, he saw that I was unhappy ; he understood that I could be of no use to him, and therefore paid me no regard whatever. Who knows but that, in order to please Madame de Villefort and my father, he may not persecute me by every means in his power ? It is not just that he should despise me thus, without any reason for so doing. Ah ! forgive me," said Valentine, perceiving the effect which her words were producing on Maximilian ; "I have done wrong, for I have given utterance to thoughts concerning that man which I did not even know existed in my heart. I do not deny the influence of which you speak, or that I have not myself experienced it ; but with me it has been productive of evil rather than good."

"Well, Valentine," said Morrel, with a sigh, "we will not discuss the matter further. I will not make a confidant of him."

"Alas !" said Valentine, "I see that I have given you pain. I can only say how sincerely I ask pardon for having grieved you. But, indeed, I am not prejudiced beyond the power of conviction. Tell me what this count of Monte-Cristo has done for you ?"

"I own that your question embarrasses me, Valentine, for I cannot say that the count has rendered me any ostensible service. Still, as I have already told you, I have an instinctive affection for him, the source of which I cannot explain to you. Has the sun done anything for me ? No ; he warms me with his rays, and it is by his light that I see you—nothing more. Has such and such a perfume done anything for me ? No ; its odour charms one of my senses—that is all I can say when I am asked why I praise it. My friendship for him is as strange and unaccountable as his for me. A secret voice seems to whisper to me that there must be something more than chance in this unexpected reciprocity of friendship. In his most simple actions, as well as in his most secret thoughts, I find a relation to my own. You will perhaps smile at me when I tell you that, ever since I have known this man, I have involuntarily entertained the idea that all the good fortune which has befallen me originated from him. However, I have managed to live thirty years without this protection, you will say ; but I will endeavour a little to illustrate my meaning. He is—

vited me to dine with him on Saturday, which was a very natural thing for him to do. Well, what have I learned since? That your mother and M. de Villefort are both coming to this dinner. I shall meet them there, and who knows what future advantages may result from the interview? This may appear to you to be no unusual combination of circumstances; nevertheless, I perceive some hidden plot in the arrangement—something, in fact, more than is apparent on a casual view of the subject. I believe that this singular man, who appears to fathom the motives of every one, has purposely arranged for me to meet M. and Madame de Villefort; and sometimes, I confess, I have gone so far as to try to read in his eyes whether he was in possession of the secret of our love."

"My good friend," said Valentine, "I should take you for a visionary, and should tremble for your reason, if I were always to hear you talk in a strain similar to this. Is it possible that you can see anything more than the merest chance in this meeting? Pray reflect a little. My father, who never goes out, has several times been on the point of refusing this invitation; Madame de Villefort, on the contrary, is burning with the desire of seeing this extraordinary nabob in his own house; therefore, she has with great difficulty prevailed on my father to accompany her. No, no! it is as I have said, Maximilian: there is no one in the world of whom I can ask help but yourself and my grandfather, who is little better than a corpse."—"I see that you are right, logically speaking," said Maximilian; "but the gentle voice which usually has such power over me fails to convince me to-day."

"I feel the same as regards yourself," said Valentine; "and I own that, if you have no stronger proof to give me——"

"I have another," replied Maximilian; "but I fear you will deem it even more absurd than the first."

way imaginable, so that I was altogether fascinated with it. The same evening some friends of mine visited me, M. de Château-Renaud, M. Debray, and five or six other choice spirits, whom you do not know, even by name. They proposed *la bonillotte*. I never play, for I am not rich enough to afford to lose, nor sufficiently poor to desire to gain. But I was at my own house, you understand, so there was nothing to be done but to send for the cards, which I did. Just as they were sitting down to table, M. de Monte-Cristo arrived. He took his seat amongst them; they played, and I won. I am almost ashamed to say that my gains amounted to 5,000 francs. We separated at midnight. I could not defer my pleasure, so I took a cabriolet and drove to the horse-dealer's. Feverish and excited, I rang at the door. The person who opened it must have taken me for a madman, for I rushed at once to the stable. Medea was standing at the rack, eating her hay. I immediately put on the saddle and bridle, to which operation she lent herself with the best grace possible; then, putting the 4,500 francs into the hands of the astonished dealer, I proceeded to fulfil my intention of passing the night in riding in the Champs Elysées. As I rode by the count's house I perceived a light in one of the windows, and fancied I saw the shadow of his figure moving behind the curtain. Now, Valentine, I firmly believe that he knew of my wish to possess this horse, and that he lost expressly to give me the means of procuring it."

"My dear Maximilian, you are really too fanciful; you will not love even me long. A man who accustoms himself to live in such a world of poetry and imagination must find far too little excitement in a common, every-day sort of attachment such as ours. But they are calling me. Do you hear?"—"Ah, Valentine!" said Maximilian, "give me but one finger through this opening in the grating, that I may have the happiness of kissing it."

"Maximilian, we said we would be to each other as two voices, two shadows."—"As you will, Valentine."

"Shall you be happy if I do what you wish?"—"Oh, yes!" Valentine mounted the bank, and passed not only her finger but her whole hand through the opening. Maximilian uttered a cry of delight, and, springing forwards, seized the hand extended towards him, and imprinted on it a fervent and impassioned kiss. The little hand was then immediately withdrawn, and the young man saw Valentine hurrying towards the house, as though she were almost terrified at her own sensations.

CHAPTER LVIII.

M. NOIRTIER DE VILLEFORT.

WE will now relate what was passing in the house of the *procureur du roi* after the departure of Madame Danglars and her daughter, and during the time of the conversation between Maximilian and Valentine, which we have just detailed. M. de Villefort entered his father's room, followed by Madame de Villefort. Both of the visitors, after saluting the old man and speaking to Barrois, a faithful servant, who had been twenty-five years in his service, took their places on either side of the paralytic.

M. Noirtier was sitting in an arm-chair, which moved upon castors, in which he was wheeled into the room in the morning, and in the same way drawn out again at night. He was placed before a large glass, which reflected the whole apartment, and permitted him to see, without any attempt to move, which would have been impossible, all who entered the room, and

everything which was going on around him. M. Noirtier, although almost as immovable and helpless as a corpse, looked at the new comers with a quick and intelligent expression, perceiving at once, by their ceremonious courtesy, that they were come on business of an unexpected and official character. Sight and hearing were the only senses remaining, and they appeared left, like two solitary sparks, to animate the miserable body which seemed fit for nothing but the grave ; it was only, however, by means of one of these senses that he could reveal the thoughts and feelings which still worked in his mind, and the look by which he gave expression to this inner life resembled one of those distant lights which are sometimes seen in perspective by the benighted traveller whilst crossing some cheerless desert, apprising him that there is still one human being, who, like himself is keeping watch amidst the silence and obscurity of night. Noirtier's hair was long and white, and flowed over his shoulders ; whilst in his eyes, shaded by thick, black lashes, was concentrated, as it often happens with any organ which is used to the exclusion of the others, all the activity, address, force, and intelligence, which were formerly diffused over his whole body ; certainly, the movement of the arm, the sound of the voice, and the agility of the body, were wanting ; but the speaking eye sufficed for all. He commanded with it ; it was the medium through which his thanks were conveyed. In short, his whole appearance produced on the mind the impression of a corpse with living eyes ; and nothing could be more startling than to observe the expression of anger or joy suddenly lighting up these organs, while the rest of the rigid and marble-like features were utterly deprived of the power of participation. Three persons only could understand this language of the poor paralytic ; these were Villefort, Valentine, and the old servant of whom we have already spoken. But as Villefort saw his father but seldom, and then only when absolutely

whilst Madame de Villefort seated herself on the left, he addressed him thus :—

"I trust you will not be displeased, sir, that Valentine has not come with us, or that I dismissed Barrois, for our conference will be one which could not with propriety be carried on in the presence of either ; Madame de Villefort and I have a communication to make to you."

Noirtier's face remained perfectly passive during this long preamble ; whilst, on the contrary, the eye of Villefort was endeavouring to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the old man's heart.

"This communication," continued the *procureur du roi*, in that cold and decisive tone which seemed at once to preclude all discussion, "will, we are sure, meet with your approbation." The eye of the invalid still retained that vacancy of expression which prevented his son from obtaining any knowledge of the feelings which were passing in his mind ; he listened, nothing more. "Sir," resumed Villefort, "we are thinking of marrying Valentine." Had the old man's face been moulded in wax, it could not have shown less emotion at this news than was now to be traced there. "The marriage will take place in less than three months," said Villefort. Noirtier's eye still retained its inanimate expression.

Madame de Villefort now took her part in the conversation, and added, — "We thought this news would possess an interest for you, sir, who have always entertained a great affection for Valentine ; it therefore only now remains for us to tell you the name of the young man for whom she is destined. It is one of the most desirable connections which could possibly be formed ; he possesses fortune, a high rank in society, and every personal qualification likely to render Valentine supremely happy : his name, however, cannot be wholly unknown to you. The person to whom we allude is M. Franz de Quesnel, Baron d'Epinay."

During the time that his wife was speaking, Villefort had narrowly watched the countenance of the old man. When Madame de Villefort pronounced the name of Franz, the pupil of M. Noirtier's eye began to dilate, and his eyelids trembled with the same movement as may be perceived on the lips of an individual about to speak, and he darted a lightning glance at Madame de Villefort and his son. The *procureur du roi*, who knew the political hatred which had formerly existed between M. Noirtier and the elder d'Epinay, well understood the agitation and anger which the announcement had produced ; but, feigning not to perceive either, he immediately resumed the conversation commenced by his wife. "Sir," said he, "you are aware that Valentine is about to enter her nineteenth year, which renders it important that she should lose no time in forming a suitable connection. Nevertheless, you have not been forgotten in our plans, and we have fully ascertained beforehand, that Valentine's future husband will consent, not to live in this house, for that might not be pleasant for the young people, but that you should live with them ; so that you and Valentine, who are so attached to each other, would not be separated, and you would be able to pursue exactly the same course of life which you have hitherto done, and thus, instead of losing, you will be a gainer by the change, as it will secure to you two children instead of one, to watch over and comfort you."

Noirtier's look was furious : it was very evident that something desperate was passing in the old man's mind, for the cry of anger and grief rose to his throat, and not being able to find vent in utterance, appeared almost to choke him, for his face and lips turned quite purple with the struggle. Villefort quietly opened a window, saying, "It is very warm, and the

heat affects M. Noirtier." He then returned to his place, but did not sit down. "This marriage," added Madame de Villefort, "is quite agreeable to the wishes of M. d'Épinay and his family : besides, he had no relations nearer than an uncle and aunt, his mother having died at his birth, and his father having been assassinated in 1815, that is to say, when he was but two years old ; it naturally followed that the child was permitted to choose his own pursuits, and he has, therefore, seldom acknowledged any other authority but that of his own will."

"That assassination was a mysterious affair," said Villefort, "and the perpetrators have hitherto escaped detection ; although suspicion has fallen on the head of more than one person." Noirtier made such an effort that his lips expanded into a smile.

"Now," continued Villefort, "those to whom the guilt really belongs, by whom the crime was committed, on whose heads the justice of man may probably descend here, and the certain judgment of God hereafter, would rejoice in the opportunity thus afforded of bestowing such a peace-offering as Valentine on the son of him whose life they so ruthlessly destroyed." Noirtier had succeeded in mastering his emotion more than could have been deemed possible with such an enfeebled and shattered frame. "Yes, I understand," was the reply contained in his look ; and this look expressed a feeling of strong indignation, mixed with profound contempt. Villefort fully understood his father's meaning, and answered by a slight shrug of his shoulders. He then motioned to his wife to take leave. "Now, sir," said Madame de Villefort, "I must bid you farewell. Would you like me to send Edward to you for a short time?"

It had been agreed that the old man should express his approbation by closing his eyes, his refusal by winking them several times, and if he had some desire or feeling to express, he raised them to heaven. If he wanted

What was it then? May I go and ask them, that I may have the opportunity of making my peace with you?"—"No, no!" said Noirtier's look.

"Ah! you frighten me. What can they have said?" and she again tried to think what it could be.

"Ah! I know," said she, lowering her voice and going close to the old man, "they have been speaking of my marriage,—have they not?"

"Yes," replied the angry look.

"I understand; you are displeased at the silence I have preserved on the subject. The reason of it was, that they had insisted on my keeping the matter a secret, and begged me not to tell you anything of it; they did not even acquaint me with their intentions, and I only discovered them by chance; that is why I have been so reserved with you, dear grandpapa. Pray forgive me." But there was no look calculated to reassure her; all it seemed to say was, "It is not only your reserve which afflicts me."

"What is it, then?" asked the young girl. "Perhaps you think I shall abandon you, dear grandpapa, and that I shall forget you when I am married?"

"No."—"They told you, then, that M. d'Epinay consented to our all living together?"

"Yes."—"Then why are you still vexed and grieved?" The old man's eyes beamed with an expression of gentle affection. "Yes, I understand," said Valentine; "it is because you love me." The old man assented. "And you are afraid I shall be unhappy?"—"Yes."

"You do not like M. Franz?" The eyes repeated several times, "No, no, no."

"Then you are vexed with the engagement?"—"Yes."

"Well, listen," said Valentine, throwing herself on her knees, and putting her arm round her grandfather's neck, "I am vexed, too, for I do not love M. Franz d'Epinay." An expression of intense joy illumined the old man's eyes. "When I wished to retire into a convent, you remember how angry you were with me?" A tear trembled in the eye of the invalid. "Well," continued Valentine, "the reason of my proposing it was that I might escape this hateful marriage, which drives me to despair." Noirtier's breathing became thick and short. "Then the idea of this marriage really grieves you too? Ah, if you could but help me—if we could both together defeat their plan! But you are unable to oppose them; you, whose mind is so quick, and whose will is so firm, are, nevertheless, as weak and unequal to the contest as I am myself. Alas, you, who would have been such a powerful protector to me in the days of your health and strength, can now only sympathise in my joys and sorrows, without being able to take any active part in them. However, this is much, and calls for gratitude; and Heaven has not taken away all my blessings when it leaves me your sympathy and kindness."

At these words there appeared in Noirtier's eye an expression of such deep meaning that the young girl thought she could read these words there, "You are mistaken; I can still do much for you."

"Do you think you can help me, dear grandpapa?" said Valentine.

"Yes." Noirtier raised his eyes; it was the sign agreed on between him and Valentine when he wanted anything.

"What is it you want, dear grandpapa?" said Valentine, and she endeavoured to recall to mind all the things which he would be likely to need; and as the ideas presented themselves to her mind, she repeated them aloud; but finding that all her efforts elicited nothing but a constant

"No," "Come," said she, "since this plan does not answer, I will have recourse to another." She then recited all the letters of the alphabet from A down to N. When she arrived at that letter, the paralytic made her understand that was the initial letter of the thing which he wanted. "Ah," said Valentine, "the thing you desire begins with the letter N; it is with N that we have to do, then. Well, let me see, what can you want which begins with N? Na—Ne—Ni—No—"

"Yes, yes, yes," said the old man's eye.

"Ah, it is No, then?"—"Yes." Valentine fetched a dictionary, which she placed on a desk before Noirtier; she opened it, and, seeing that the old man's eye was thoroughly fixed on its pages, she ran her finger quickly up and down the columns. During the six years which had passed since Noirtier first fell into this sad state, Valentine's powers of invention had been too often put to the test not to render her expert in devising expedients for gaining a knowledge of his wishes; and the constant practice had so perfected her in the art, that she guessed the old man's meaning as quickly as if he himself had been able to seek for what he wanted. At the word *Notary*, Noirtier made a sign to her to stop. "Notary," said she, "do you want a notary, dear grandpapa?" The old man again signified that it was a notary he desired.

"You would wish a notary to be sent for, then?" said Valentine.

"Yes."—"Shall my father be informed of your wish?"—"Yes."

"Do you wish the notary should be sent for immediately?"

"Yes."—"Then they shall go for him directly, dear grandpapa. Is that all you want?"

"Yes." Valentine rang the bell, and ordered the servant to tell Monsieur or Madame de Villefort that they were requested to come to M. Noirtier's room. "Are you satisfied now?" inquired Valentine.

"Yes."—"I am sure you are: it is not very difficult to discover that."

CHAPTER LIX.

THE WILL.

AS soon as Barrois had left the room, Noirtier looked at Valentine with that peculiar expression which conveyed so much deep meaning. The young girl perfectly understood the look, and so did Villefort, for his countenance became clouded, and he knitted his eyebrows angrily. He took a seat, and quietly awaited the arrival of the notary. Noirtier saw him cast himself with an appearance of perfect indifference, at the same time giving a side look at Valentine, which made her understand that she also was to remain in the room. Three-quarters of an hour after, Barrois returned, bringing the notary with him. "Sir," said Villefort, after the first salutations were over, "you were sent for by M. Noirtier, whom you see here. All his limbs have become completely paralysed, he has lost his voice also, and we ourselves find much trouble in endeavouring to catch some fragments of his meaning." Noirtier cast an appealing look on Valentine, which look was at once so earnest and imperative, that she answered immediately. "Sir," said she, "I perfectly understand my grandfather's meaning at all times."

"That is quite true," said Barrois; "and that is what I told the gentleman as we walked along."—"Permit me," said the notary, turning first to Villefort and then to Valentine—"permit me to state that the case in question is just one of those in which a public officer like myself cannot proceed to act without thereby incurring a dangerous responsibility. The first thing necessary to render an act valid is, that the notary should be thoroughly convinced that he has faithfully interpreted the will and wishes of the person dictating the act. Now, I cannot be sure of the approbation or disapprobation of a client who cannot speak; and as the object of his desire or his repugnance cannot be clearly proved to me, on account of his want of speech, my services here would be quite useless, and cannot be legally exercised." The notary then prepared to retire. An imperceptible smile of triumph was expressed on the lips of the procureur du roi. Noirtier looked at Valentine with an expression so full of grief, that she arrested the departure of the notary. "Sir," said she, "the language which I speak with my grandfather may be easily learnt; and I can teach you, in a few minutes, to understand it almost as well as I can myself. Will you tell me what you require, in order to set your conscience quite at ease on the subject?"

"In order to render an act valid, I must be certain of the approbation or disapprobation of my client. Illness of the body would not affect the validity of the deed; but sanity of mind is absolutely requisite."

"Well, sir, by the help of two signs, with which I will acquaint you presently, you may ascertain with perfect certainty that my grandfather is still in the full possession of all his mental faculties. M. Noirtier, being deprived of voice and motion, is accustomed to convey his meaning by closing his eyes when he wishes to signify 'yes,' and to wink when he means 'no.' You now know quite enough to enable you to converse with M. Noirtier; try." Noirtier gave Valentine such a look of tenderness and gratitude that it was comprehended even by the notary himself. "You have heard and understood what your granddaughter has been saying, sir, have you?" asked the notary. Noirtier closed his eyes. "And you approve of what she said—that is to say, you declare that the signs which she mentioned are really those by means of which you are accustomed to convey your thoughts?"—"Yes."

"It was you who sent for me?"—"Yes."

"To make your will?"—"Yes."

"And you do not wish me to go away without fulfilling your original intentions?" The old man winked violently. "Well, sir," said the young girl, "do you understand now, and is your conscience perfectly at rest on the subject?" But before the notary could answer, Villefort had drawn him aside. "Sir," said he, "do you suppose for a moment that a man can sustain a physical shock, such as M. Noirtier has received, without any detriment to his mental faculties?"—"It is not exactly that, sir," said the notary, "which makes me uneasy; but the difficulty will be in arriving at his thoughts and intentions, so as to be able to provoke his answers."

"You must see that to be an utter impossibility," said Villefort. Valentine and the old man heard this conversation; and Noirtier fixed his eye so earnestly on Valentine that she felt bound to answer to the look.

"Sir," said she, "that need not make you uneasy, however difficult it may at first sight appear to be. I can discover and explain to you my grandfather's thoughts, so as to put an end to all your doubts and fears on the subject. I have now been six years with M. Noirtier, and let him tell you if ever once, during that time, he has entertained a thought which he was unable to make me understand."

"No," signed the old man.

"Let us try what we can do, then," said the notary. "You accept this young lady as your interpreter, M. Noirtier?"

"Yes."—"Well, sir, what do you require of me, and what document is it that you wish to be drawn up?" Valentine named all the letters of the alphabet until she came to W. At this letter the eloquent eye of Noirtier gave her notice that she was to stop. "It is very evident that it is the letter W which M. Noirtier wants," said the notary. "Wait," said Valentine; and, turning to her grandfather, she repeated, "Wa—We—Wi—" The



M. NOIRTIER DICTATING HIS WILL.



afterwards, by the state in which we find the affairs of the testator, and by yourself, who, having had the management of them, can, doubtless, give full information on the subject. But besides all this, in order that the instrument may not be contested, I am anxious to give it the greatest possible authenticity; therefore, one of my colleagues will help me, and, contrary to custom, will assist in the dictation of the testament. Are you satisfied, sir?" continued the notary, addressing the old man.

"Yes," looked the invalid, his eye beaming with delight at his meaning being so well understood.

"What is he going to do?" thought Villefort, whose position demanded so much reserve, but who was longing to know what were the intentions of his father. He left the room to give orders for another notary to be sent, but Barrois, who had heard all that passed, had guessed his master's wishes, and had already gone to fetch one. The procureur du roi then told his wife to come up. In the course of a quarter of an hour every one had assembled in the chamber of the paralytic; the second notary had also arrived. A few words sufficed for a mutual understanding between the two officers of the law. They read to Noirtier the formal copy of a will, in order to give him an idea of the terms in which such documents are generally couched; then, in order to test the capacity of the testator, the first notary said, turning towards him,—“When an individual makes his will, it is generally in favour or in prejudice of some person.”—

“Yes.”

“Have you an exact idea of the amount of your fortune?”—“Yes.”

“I will name to you several sums which will increase by graduation; you will stop me when I reach the one representing the amount of your own possessions?”—“Yes.” There was a kind of solemnity in this interrogation. Never had the struggle between mind and matter been more apparent than now; and if it was not a sublime, it was, at least, a curious spectacle. They had formed a circle round the invalid; the second notary was sitting at a table, prepared for writing, and his colleague was standing before the testator in the act of interrogating him on the subject to which we have alluded. “Your fortune exceeds 300,000 francs, does it not?” asked he. Noirtier made a sign that it did. “Do you possess 400,000 francs?” inquired the notary. Noirtier’s eye remained immovable. “500,000?” The same expression continued. “600,000—700,000—800,000—900,000?” Noirtier stopped him at the last-named sum. “You are then in possession of 900,000 francs?” asked the notary. “Yes.”—“In landed property?”—“No.”

“In stock?”—“Yes.”

“The stock is in your own hands?” The look which M. Noirtier cast on Barrois showed that there was something wanting which he knew where to find; the old servant left the room, and presently returned, bringing with him a small casket. “Do you permit us to open this casket?” asked the notary. Noirtier gave his assent. They opened it, and found 900,000 francs in bank scrip. The first notary handed over each note, as he examined it, to his colleague.

The total amount was found to be as M. Noirtier had stated. “It is all as he has said; it is very evident that the mind still retains its full force and vigour.” Then, turning towards the paralytic, he said, “You possess, then, 900,000 francs of capital, which, according to the manner in which you have invested it, ought to bring in an income of about 40,000 livres?”—“Yes.”

“To whom do you desire to leave this fortune?”—“Oh!” said

Madame de Villefort, "there is not much doubt on that subject. M. Noirtier tenderly loves his granddaughter, Mademoiselle de Villefort; it is she who has nursed and tended him for six years, and has, by her devoted attention, fully secured the affection, I had almost said the gratitude, of her grandfather; and it is but just that she should reap the fruit of her devotion." The eye of Noirtier clearly showed by its expression that he was not deceived by the false assent given by Madame de Villefort's words and manner to the motives which she supposed him to entertain. "Is it, then, to Mademoiselle Valentine de Villefort that you leave these 900,000 francs?" demanded the notary, thinking he had only to insert this clause, but waiting first for the assent of Noirtier, which it was necessary should be given before all the witnesses of this singular scene. Valentine, when her name was made the subject of discussion, had stepped back, to escape unpleasant observation; her eyes were cast down, and she was crying. The old man looked at her for an instant with an expression of the deepest tenderness; then, turning towards the notary, he significantly winked his eye in token of dissent.

"What!" said the notary, "do you not intend making Mademoiselle Valentine de Villefort your residuary legatee?"—"No."

"You are not making any mistake, are you?" said the notary; "you really mean to declare that such is not your intention?"—"No, no." Valentine raised her head; she was struck dumb with astonishment; it was not so much the conviction that she was disinherited which caused her grief, but her total inability to account for the feelings which had provoked her grandfather to such an act; but Noirtier looked at her with so much affectionate tenderness that she exclaimed, "Oh, grandpapa! I see now that it is only your fortune of which you deprive me; you still leave me the love which I have always enjoyed."—"Ah, yes, most assuredly!"

"Ah!" cried Valentine, suddenly, "I understand! it is my marriage you mean, is it not, dear grandpapa?"—"Yes, yes, yes," signed the paralytic, casting on Valentine a look of joyful gratitude for having guessed his meaning.

"You are angry with us all on account of this marriage, are you not?"

"Yes."—"Really, this is too absurd," said Villefort.

"Excuse me, sir," replied the notary; "on the contrary, M. Noirtier's meaning is quite evident to me, and I can quite easily connect the train of ideas passing in his mind."—"You do not wish me to marry M. Franz d'Epinay?" observed Valentine.

"I do not wish it," said the eye of her grandfather. "And you disinherit your grand-daughter," continued the notary, "because she has contracted an engagement contrary to your wishes?"—"Yes."

"So that, but for this marriage, she would have been your heir?"—"Yes." There was a profound silence. The two notaries were holding a consultation as to the best means of proceeding with the affair; Valentine was looking at her grandfather with a smile of intense gratitude, and Villefort was biting his lips with vexation, whilst Madame de Villefort could not succeed in repressing an inward feeling of joy, which, in spite of herself, appeared in her whole countenance. "But," said Villefort, who was the first to break the silence, "I consider that I am the best judge of the propriety of the marriage in question. I am the only person possessing the right to dispose of my daughter's hand. It is my wish that she should marry M. Franz d'Epinay—and she shall marry him!" Valentine sank weeping into a chair.

"Sir," said the notary, "how do you intend disposing of your fortune in case Mademoiselle de Villefort still determines on marrying M. Franz?" The old man gave no answer. "You will, of course, dispose of it in some way or other?"—"Yes."

"In favour of some member of your family?"—"No."

"Do you intend devoting it to charitable purposes, then?" pursued the notary.—"Yes."

"But," said the notary, "you are aware that the law does not allow a son to be entirely deprived of his patrimony?"—"Yes."

"You only intend, then, to dispose of that part of your fortune which the law allows you to subtract from the inheritance of your son?" Noirtier made no answer. "Do you still wish to dispose of all?"

"Yes."

"But they will contest the will after your death?"—"No."

"My father knows me," replied Villefort, "he is quite sure that his wishes will be held sacred by me; besides, he understands that in my position I cannot plead against the poor." The eye of Noirtier beamed with triumph. "What do you decide on, sir?" asked the notary of Villefort.

"Nothing, sir; it is a resolution which my father has taken, and I know he never alters his mind. I am quite resigned. These 900,000 francs will go out of the family in order to enrich some hospital; but it is ridiculous thus to yield to the caprices of an old man; and I shall, therefore, act according to my conscience." Having said this, Villefort quitted the room with his wife, leaving his father at liberty to do as he pleased. The same day the will was made, the witnesses were brought, it was approved by the old man, sealed in the presence of all, and given in charge to M. Des Champs, the family notary.

CHAPTER LX.

THE TELEGRAPH.

M. AND MADAME DE VILLEFORT found on their return that the count of Monte-Cristo, who had come to visit them in their absence, had been ushered into the drawing-room, and was still awaiting them there. Madame de Villefort, who had not yet sufficiently recovered from her late emotion to allow of her entertaining visitors so immediately, retired to her bedroom, whilst the *procureur du roi*, who could better depend upon himself, proceeded at once to the drawing-room. Although M. de Villefort flattered himself that, to all outward view, he had completely masked the feelings which were passing in his mind, he did not know that the cloud was still lowering on his brow, so much so that the count immediately remarked his sombre and thoughtful air. "*Mh foi !*" said Monte-Cristo, after the first compliments were over, "what is the matter with you, M. de Villefort? Have I arrived at the moment that you were drawing up some case of capital indictment?" Villefort tried to smile. "No, M. le Comte," replied M. de Villefort, "I am the only victim in this case. It is I who lose my cause; and it is ill-luck, obstinacy, and folly which have caused it to be decided against me."

"To what do you allude?" said Monte-Cristo, with well-feigned interest. "Have you really met with some great misfortune?"

"Oh! M. le Comte," said Villefort, with a bitter smile, "it is only a loss of money which I have sustained—nothing worth mentioning, I assure you."—"True," said Monte-Cristo, "the loss of a sum of money becomes almost immaterial with a fortune such as you possess, and a mind raised, as yours is, above the common events of life."

"It is not so much the loss of the money which vexes me," said Villefort, "though, after all, 999,999 francs are worth regretting; but I am the

"And is there no means of making him revoke his decision?"

"Yes," said Madame de Villefort; "and it is still entirely in the power of my husband to cause the will, which is now in prejudice of Valentine, to be altered in her favour." The count, who perceived that M. and Madame de Villefort were beginning to speak in parables, appeared to pay no attention to the conversation, and feigned to be busily engaged in watching Edward, who was mischievously pouring some ink into the bird's water-glass. "My dear," said Villefort, in answer to his wife, "you know I have never been accustomed to play the patriarch in my family, nor have I ever considered that the fate of a universe was to be decided by my nod. Nevertheless, it is necessary that my will should be respected in my family, and that the folly of an old man and the caprice of a child should not be allowed to overturn a project which I have entertained for so many years. The Baron d'Epinay was my friend, as you know, and an alliance with his son is the most suitable thing that could possibly be arranged."

"Do you think," said Madame de Villefort, "that Valentine is in league with him? She has always been opposed to this marriage, and I should not be at all surprised if what we have just seen and heard is nothing but the execution of a plan concerted between them."

"Madame," said Villefort, "believe me, a fortune of 900,000 francs is not so easily renounced."

"She could, nevertheless, make up her mind to renounce the world, sir, since it is only about a year ago that she herself proposed entering a convent."—"Never mind," replied Villefort; "I say that this marriage *shall* be consummated!"

"Notwithstanding your father's wishes to the contrary?" said Madame de Villefort, selecting a new point of attack. "That is a serious thing!" Monte-Cristo, who pretended not to be listening, heard, however, every word that was said. "Madame," replied Villefort, "I can truly say that I have always entertained a high respect for my father, because, to the natural feeling of relationship was added the consciousness of his moral superiority. The name of father is sacred in two senses; he should be revered as the author of our being, and as a master whom we ought to obey; but, under the present circumstances, I am justified in doubting the wisdom of an old man who, because he hated the father, vents his anger on the son; it would be ridiculous in me to regulate my conduct by such caprices. I shall still continue to preserve the same respect toward M. Noirtier; I will suffer, without complaint, the pecuniary deprivation to which he has subjected me; but I will remain firm in my determination, and the world shall see which party has reason on his side. Consequently I shall marry my daughter to the Baron Franz d'Epinay, because I consider it would be a proper and eligible match for her to make, and, in short, because I choose to bestow my daughter's hand on whomsoever I please."

"What!" said the count, the approbation of whose eye Villefort had frequently solicited during this speech. "What! do you say that M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort because she is going to marry M. le Baron Franz d'Epinay?"—"Yes, sir, that is the reason," said Villefort, shrugging his shoulders.

"The apparent reason, at least," said Madame de Villefort.

"The *real* reason, madame, I can assure you; I know my father."

"But I want to know in what way M. d'Epinay can have displeased your father more than any other person?"—"I believe I know M. Franz

d'Epinaï," said the count ; " is he not the son of General de Quesnel, who was created Baron d'Epinaï by Charles X. ?"

" The same," said Villefort.

" Well ! but he is a charming young man, according to my ideas."

" He is, which makes me believe that it is only an excuse of M. Noirtier's to prevent his grand-daughter marrying ; old men are always so selfish in their affection," said Madame de Villefort.—" But," said Monte-Cristo, " do you not know any cause for this hatred ?"

" Ah, *ma foi* ! who is to know ?"

" Perhaps it is some political difference ?"

" My father and the Baron d'Epinaï lived in those stormy times of which I have only seen the few last days," said De Villefort.

" Was not your father a Bonapartist ?" asked Monte-Cristo ; " I think I remember that you told me something of that kind."

" My father has been a Jacobin more than anything else," said Villefort, carried by his emotion beyond the bounds of prudence ; " and the senator's robe, which Napoleon cast on his shoulders, only served to disguise the old man without in any degree changing him. When my father conspired, it was not for the emperor, it was against the Bourbons ; for M. Noirtier possessed this peculiarity, he never projected any Utopian schemes which could never be realized, but strove for possibilities, and he applied to the realization of these possibilities the terrible theories of Montaigne, who never shrank from any means which he deemed necessary to their accomplishment."—" Well," said Monte-Cristo, " it is just as I thought ; it was politics which brought Noirtier and M. d'Epinaï into personal contact. Although General d'Epinaï served under Napoleon, did he not still retain royalist sentiments ? And was he not the person who was assassinated one evening on leaving a Bonapartist meeting to

sider it necessary to continue to bury herself alive by being shut up with M. Noirtier." The count listened with satisfaction to this tale of wounded self-love and defeated ambition. "But it seems to me," said Monte-Cristo, "and I must begin by asking your pardon for what I am about to say, that if M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort on account of her marrying a man whose father he detested, he cannot have the same cause of complaint against this dear Edward."

"True," said Madame de Villefort, with an intonation of voice which it is impossible to describe; "is it not unjust—shamefully unjust? Poor Edward is as much M. Noirtier's grandchild as Valentine, and yet, if she had not been going to marry M. Franz, M. Noirtier would have left her all his money; and supposing Valentine to be disinherited by her grandfather, she will still be three times richer than he." The count listened and said no more. "M. le Comte," said Villefort, "we will not entertain you any longer with our family misfortunes. It is true that my patrimony will go to endow charitable institutions, and my father will have deprived me of my lawful inheritance without any reason for doing so; but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have acted like a man of sense and feeling. M. d'Epinay, to whom I had promised the interest of this sum, shall receive it, even if I endure the most cruel privations."

"However," said Madame de Villefort, returning to the one idea which incessantly occupied her mind, "perhaps it would be better to represent this unlucky affair to M. d'Epinay, in order to give him the opportunity of himself renouncing his claim to the hand of Mademoiselle de Villefort." — "Ah, that would be a great pity," said Villefort.

"A great pity!" said Monte-Cristo.

"Undoubtedly," said Villefort, moderating the tones of his voice; "a marriage, once concerted and then broken off, throws a sort of discredit on a young lady; then, again, the old reports, which I was so anxious to put an end to, will instantly gain ground,—no, it will all go well; M. d'Epinay, if he is an honourable man, will consider himself more than ever pledged to Mademoiselle de Villefort; unless he were actuated by a decided feeling of avarice; but that is impossible." — "I agree with M. de Villefort," said Monte-Cristo, fixing his eyes on Madame de Villefort; "and if I were sufficiently intimate with him to allow of giving my advice, I would persuade him, since I have been told M. d'Epinay is coming back, to settle this affair at once beyond all possibility of revocation. I will answer for the success of a project which will reflect so much honour on M. de Villefort." The procureur du roi rose, delighted with the proposition, but his wife slightly changed colour. "Well, that is all that I wanted, and I will be guided by a counsellor such as you are," said he, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo. "Therefore let every one here look upon what has passed to-day as if it had not happened, and as though we had never thought of such a thing as a change in our original plans."

"Sir," said the count, "the world, unjust as it is, will be pleased with your resolution; your friends will be proud of you, and M. d'Epinay, even if he took Mademoiselle de Villefort without any dowry, which he will not do, would be delighted with the idea of entering a family which could make such sacrifices in order to keep a promise and fulfil a duty." At the conclusion of these words, the count rose to depart. "Are you going to leave us, M. le Comte?" said Madame de Villefort.

"I am sorry to say I must do so, madame; I only came to remind you of your promise for Saturday."

"Did you fear that we should forget it?" — "You are very good,

madame ; but M. de Villefort has so many important and urgent occupations."

"My husband has given his word, sir," said Madame de Villefort ; "you have just seen him resolve to keep it when he has all to lose, and surely there is more reason for his doing so where he has all to gain !"

"And," said Villefort, "is it at your house in the Champs-Élysées that you receive your visitors ?"—"No," said Monte-Cristo, "which is precisely the reason which renders your kindness more meritorious,—it is in the country."—"In the country ?"—"Yes."

"Where is it, then ? near Paris, is it not ?"

"Very near ; only half a league from the Barriers,—it is at Auteuil."

"At Auteuil ?" said Villefort ; "true, Madame de Villefort told me you lived at Auteuil, since it was to your house that she was taken. And in what part of Auteuil do you reside ?"

"Rue de la Fontaine."—"Rue de la Fontaine ?" exclaimed Villefort, in an agitated tone ; "at what number ?"

"No. 28."—"Then," cried Villefort, "was it you who bought M. de Saint-Méran's house ?"

"Did it belong to M. de Saint-Méran ?" demanded Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," replied Madame de Villefort : "and, would you believe it, M. le Comte—"

"Believe what ?"—"You think this house pretty, do you not ?"

"I think it charming."

"Well ! my husband would never live in it."

"Indeed !" returned Monte-Cristo ; "that is a prejudice on your part, M. de Villefort, for which I am quite at a loss to account."

"I do not like Auteuil, sir," said the *procureur du roi*, making an evident effort to appear calm.

made to cleave the air with such precision as to convey to the distance of three hundred leagues the ideas and wishes of a man sitting at a table at one end of the line to another man similarly placed at the opposite extremity, and all this effected by the simple act of volition on the part of the individual communicating the intelligence. I began to think of genii, sylphs, gnomes, in short, of all the ministers of the occult sciences, until I laughed aloud at the freaks of my own imagination. Now, it never occurred to me to wish for a nearer inspection of these large insects, with their long black claws, for I always feared to find under their stone wings some little human genius fagged to death with cabals, factions, and government intrigues. But one fine day I learned that the mover of this telegraph was only a poor wretch, hired for twelve hundred francs a year, and employed all the day, not in studying the heavens like an astronomer, nor in gazing on the water like an angler, nor even enjoying the privilege of observing the country around him; but all his monotonous life was passed in watching his fellow-insect, who was placed four or five leagues distant from him. At length I experienced a desire to observe nearer this living chrysalis, and to endeavour to understand the secret part played by those insect-actors simply by means of successively pulling different pieces of string."

"And are you going there?"—"I am."

"What telegraph do you intend visiting?—that of the home department, or of the observatoire?"—"Oh, no! I shall find there people who will force me to understand things of which I would prefer to remain ignorant, and who would try to explain to me, in spite of myself, a mystery which even they do not understand. *Ma foi!* I should wish to keep my illusions concerning insects unimpaired; it is quite enough to have those dissipated which I had formed of my fellow-creatures. I shall, therefore, not visit either of these telegraphs, but one in the open country where I shall find a good-natured simpleton, who knows no more than the machine he is employed to work."

"You are a singular man," said Villefort.

"What line would you advise me to study?"

"That which is most in use just at this time."

"The Spanish one, you mean, I suppose?"—"Yes; should you like a letter to the minister that they might explain to you——"

"No," said Monte-Cristo; "since, as I told you before, I do not wish to comprehend it. The moment I understand it there will no longer exist a telegraph for me; it will be nothing more than a sign from M. Duchâtel, or from M. Montalivet, transmitted to the préfet of Bayonne, mystified by two Greek words, *télé, graphein*. It is the insect with black claws, and the awful word which I wish to retain in my imagination in all its purity and in all its importance."—"Go then; for in the course of two hours it will be dark, and you will not be able to see anything."

"*Ma foi!* you frighten me. Which is the nearest way? Bayonne?"

"Yes! the road to Bayonne!"

"And afterwards the road to Chatillon?"—"Yes."

"By the tower of Montlhéry, you mean?"—"Yes."

"Thank you. Good-bye. On Saturday I will tell you my impressions concerning the telegraph." At the door the count was met by the two notaries, who had just completed the act which was to disinherit Valentine, and who were leaving under the conviction of having done a thing which could not fail of redounding considerably to their credit.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE METHOD OF RIDDING A GARDENER OF DORMICE THAT EAT HIS PEACHES.

NOT on the same night he had intended, but the next morning, the count of Monte-Cristo went out by the Barrier d'Enfer, taking the road to Orleans. Leaving the village of Linas, without stopping at the telegraph, which, at the moment the count passed, threw out its long bony arms, he reached the tower of Montlhéry, situated, as every one knows, upon the highest point of the plain of that name. At the foot of the hill the count dismounted, and began to ascend the mountain by a little winding path, about eighteen inches wide; when he reached the summit he found himself stopped by a hedge, upon which green fruit had succeeded to red and white flowers.

Monte-Cristo looked for the door of the enclosure, and was not long in finding it. It was a little wooden gate, working on willow hinges, and fastened with a nail and string. The count soon understood its mechanism, and the door opened. He then found himself in a little garden, about twenty feet long by twelve wide, bounded on one side by part of the hedge, in which was formed the ingenious machine we have named a door; and on the other by the old tower, covered with ivy and studded with wild flowers. No one would have thought to have seen it thus wrinkled and yet adorned, like an old lady whose grandchildren come to greet her on her birthday, that it could have related some terrible scenes, if it could have added a voice to the menacing ears which an old proverb awards to walls. The garden was crossed by a path of red gravel, edged by a border of thick box, of many years' growth, and of a tone and colour that would have delighted the heart of Delacroix, our modern Rubens. This path was formed in the shape of the figure 8; thus, in its windings

fall from his hand. "You are gathering your crop, sir?" said Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"Excuse me, sir," replied the man, raising his hand to his cap; "I am not up there, I know, but I have only just come down."—"Do not let me interfere with you in anything, my friend," said the count; "gather your strawberries, if, indeed, there are any left."

"I have ten left," said the man, "for here are eleven, and I had twenty-one, five more than last year. But I am not surprised; the spring has been warm this year, and strawberries require heat, sir. This is the reason that, instead of the sixteen I had last year, I have this year, you see, eleven, already plucked—twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. Ah, I miss three! they were here last night, sir—I am sure they were here—I counted them. It must be the son of Mère Simon who has stolen them; I saw him strolling about here this morning. Ah! the young rascal! stealing in a garden, he does not know where that may lead him to."

"Certainly, it is wrong," said Monte-Cristo, "but you should take into consideration the youth and greediness of the delinquent."—"Of course," said the gardener; "but that does not make it the less unpleasant. But, sir, once more I beg pardon; perhaps you are an officer that I am detaining here?" And he glanced timidly at the count's blue coat.

"Calm yourself, my friend," said the count, with that smile which at his will became so terrible or benevolent, and which this time beamed only with the latter expression; "I am not an inspector, but a traveller, conducted here by a curiosity he half repents of, since he causes you to lose your time."—"Ah! my time is not valuable," replied the man, with a melancholy smile. "Still, it belongs to government, and I ought not to waste it; but having received the signal that I might rest for an hour" (here he glanced at the sun-dial, for there was everything in the enclosure of Monthéry, even a sun-dial), "and having ten minutes before me, and my strawberries being ripe, when a day longer—by the bye, sir, do you think dormice eat them?"

"Indeed, I should think not," replied Monte-Cristo; "dormice are bad neighbours for us who do not eat them preserved, as the Romans did."

"What! did the Romans eat them?" said the gardener—"ate dormice?"

"I have read so in Petronius," said the count.

"Really! They can't be nice, though they do say 'as fat as a dormouse.' It is not a wonder they are fat, sleeping all day, and only waking to eat all night. Listen. Last year I had four apricots—they stole one; I had one nectarine, only one—well, sir, they ate half of it on the wall; a splendid nectarine—I never ate a better."—"You ate it?"

"That is to say, the half that was left—you understand; it was exquisite, sir. Ah, those gentlemen never choose the worst morsels; like Mère Simon's son, who has not chosen the worst strawberries. But this year," continued the horticulturist, "I'll take care it shall not happen, even if I should be forced to sit up the whole night to watch when the strawberries are ripe." Monte-Cristo had seen enough. Every man has a devouring passion in his heart, as every fruit has its worm: that of the man at the telegraph was horticulture. He began gathering the vine-leaves which screened the sun from the grapes, and won the heart of the gardener. "Did you come here, sir, to see the telegraph?" he said.

"Yes, if it be not contrary to the rules."—"Oh, no," said the gardener; "there are no orders against doing so, providing there is nothing dangerous, and that no one knows what we are saying."

"I have been told," said the count, "that you do not always yourselves understand the signals you repeat."

"Certainly, sir; and that is what I like best," said the man, smiling.

"Why do you like that best?"

"Because then I have no responsibility. I am a machine then, and nothing else; and so long as I work, nothing more is required of me."

"Is it possible," said Monte-Cristo to himself, "that I can have met with a man that has no ambition? That would spoil my plans."

"Sir," said the gardener, glancing at the sun-dial, "the ten minutes are nearly expired; I must return to my post. Will you go up with me?"

"I follow you." Monte-Cristo entered the tower, which was divided into three stages. The lowest contained gardening implements, such as spades, rakes, watering-pots, hung against the wall; this was all the furniture. The second was the usual dwelling, or rather sleeping-place of the man; it contained a few poor articles of household furniture—a bed, a table, two chairs, a stone pitcher—and some dry herbs, hung up to the ceiling, which the count recognised as sweet peas, and of which the good man was preserving the seeds, having labelled them with as much care as if he had been master botanist in the *Jardin des Plantes*.

"Does it require much study to learn the art of telegraphing, sir?" asked Monte-Cristo.—"The study does not take long; it was acting as a supernumerary that was so tedious."

"And what is the pay?"—"A thousand francs, sir."

"It is nothing."—"No; but then we are lodged, as you perceive."

Monte-Cristo looked at the room. They passed on to the third stage; it was the room of the telegraph. Monte-Cristo looked in turns at the two iron handles by which the machine was worked. "It is very interesting," he said; "but it must be very tedious for a lifetime."

"And what is it saying—anything you understand?"

"Yes; it asks if I am ready."—"And you reply?"

"By the same sign, which, at the same time, tells my right-hand correspondent that I am ready, while it gives notice to my left-hand correspondent to prepare in his turn."

"It is very ingenious," said the count.

"You will see," said the man, proudly; "in five minutes he will speak."

"I have, then, five minutes," said Monte-Cristo to himself; "it is more time than I require. My dear sir, will you allow me to ask you a question?"

"What is it, sir?"—"You are fond of gardening?"

"Passionately."—"And you would be pleased to have, instead of this terrace of twenty feet, an enclosure of two acres?"

"Sir, I should make a terrestrial paradise of it."

"You live badly on your thousand francs?"

"Badly enough; but yet I do live."

"Yes; but you have only a wretched garden!"

"True, the garden is not large."

"And, then, such as it is, it is filled with dormice, who eat everything."

"Ah! they are my scourges."—"Tell me, should you have the misfortune to turn your head while your right-hand correspondent was telegraphing—"

"I should not see him."—"Then what would happen?"

"I could not repeat the signals."—"And then?"

"Not having repeated them, through negligence, I should be fined."

"How much?"—"A hundred francs."

"The tenth of your income—that would be fine work."

"Ah!" said the man.

"Has it ever happened to you?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Once, sir, when I was grafting a rose-tree."

"Well, suppose you were to alter a signal, and substitute another?"

"Ah, that is another case; I should be turned off, and lose my pension."

"Three hundred francs?"—"A hundred crowns, yes, sir; so you see that I am not likely to do any of these things."—"Not even for fifteen years' wages? Come, it is worth thinking about?"

"For fifteen thousand francs!"—"Yes."

"Sir, you alarm me."—"Nonsense!"

"Sir, you are tempting me?"

"Just so; fifteen thousand francs, do you understand?"

"Sir, let me see my right-hand correspondent!"

"On the contrary, do not look at him, but on this."

"What is it?"—"What! do you not know these little papers?"

"Bank-notes!"—"Exactly; there are fifteen of them."

"And whose are they?"—"Yours, if you like."

"Mine!" exclaimed the man, half-suffocated.

"Yes; yours—your own property."

"Sir, my right-hand correspondent is signalling."—"Let him."

"Sir, you have distracted me; I shall be fined."

"That will cost you a hundred francs; you see it is your interest to take my bank-notes."—"Sir, my right-hand correspondent redoubles his signals; he is impatient."

"Never mind—take these," and the count placed the packet in the hands of the man. "Now this is not all," he said; "you cannot live upon your fifteen thousand francs."

"I shall still have my place."—"No! you will lose it, for you are going to alter the sign of your correspondent."

"Oh, sir, what are you proposing?"—"A jest!"

"Sir, unless you force me——"

"I think I can effectually force you;" and Monte-Cristo drew another packet from his pocket. "Here are ten thousand more francs," he said, "with the fifteen thousand already in your pocket, they will make twenty-five thousand. With five thousand you can buy a pretty little house with two acres of land; the remaining twenty thousand will bring you in a thousand francs a year."

"A garden with two acres of land!"

"And a thousand francs a-year."—"Oh, heavens!"

"Come, take them!" and Monte-Cristo forced the bank-notes into his hand. "What am I to do?"

"Nothing very difficult."—"But what is it?"

"To repeat these signs;" Monte-Cristo took a paper from his pocket, upon which were drawn three signs, with numbers to indicate the order in which they were to be worked.

"There, you see it will not take long."—"Yes; but——"

"Do this, and you will have nectarines and all the rest." The mark was hit; red with fever, while the large drops fell from his brow, the man executed, one after the other, the three signs given by the count, notwithstanding the frightful contortions of the right-hand correspondent, who, not understanding the change, began to think the gardener had become mad. As to the left-hand one, he conscientiously repeated the same signals, which were definitively carried to the Minister of the Interior. "Now you are rich," said Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," replied the man, "but at what a price!"—"Listen, friend,"

ruined, and passed a very bad night. Next morning "*Le Moniteur*" contained the following:—"It was without any foundation that '*Le Messager*' yesterday announced the flight of Don Carlos and the revolt of Barcelona. The king (Don Carlos) has not left Bourges, and the Peninsula is in the enjoyment of profound peace. A telegraphic signal, improperly interpreted, owing to the fog, was the cause of this error."

The funds rose one per cent. higher than before they had fallen. This, reckoning his loss, and what he had missed gaining, made the difference of a million to Danglars. "Good!" said Monte-Cristo to Morrel, who was at his house when the news arrived of the strange reverse of fortune of which Danglars had been the victim, "I have just made a discovery for twenty-five thousand francs, for which I would have paid a hundred thousand."

"What have you discovered?" asked Morrel.

"I have just discovered the method of ridding a gardener of the dormice that eat his peaches."

CHAPTER LXII.

THE PHANTOMS.

AT first sight the exterior of the house at Auteuil presented nothing splendid, nothing one would expect from the destined residence of the magnificent count of Monte-Cristo; but this simplicity was but according to the will of its master, who positively ordered nothing to be altered outside; this was seen by examining the interior. Indeed, scarcely could the door be opened before the scene changed. M. Bertuccio had outdone himself in the taste displayed in furnishing, and in the rapidity with which it was executed. As formerly the duc d'Antin had in a single night caused a whole avenue of trees to be cut down that annoyed Louis XIV., so in three days had M. Bertuccio planted an entirely bare court with poplars, large spreading sycamores shading the different parts of the house, before which, instead of the usual paving-stones, half hidden by the grass, there extended a turf lawn but that morning laid down, and upon which the water was yet glistening. For the rest, the orders had been issued by the count; he himself had given a plan to Bertuccio, marking the spot where each tree was to be planted, and the shape and extent of the lawn which was to succeed the paving-stones. Thus the house had become unrecognisable, and Bertuccio himself declared he scarcely knew it, encircled as it was by a framework of trees. The overseer would not have objected, while he was about it, to have made some improvements in the garden, but the count had positively forbidden it to be touched. Bertuccio made amends, however, by loading the antechambers, staircases, and chimneys with flowers. That which, above all, manifested the shrewdness of the steward, and the profound science of the master, the one in carrying out the ideas of the other, was, that this house, which appeared only the night before so sad and gloomy, impregnated with that sickly smell one can almost fancy to be the smell of time, had, in one day, acquired the aspect of life, was scented with its master's favourite perfumes, and had the very light regulated according to his wish. When the count arrived, he had under his touch his books and arms, his eyes rested upon his favourite pictures; his dogs, whose caresses he loved, welcomed him in the antechamber; the birds, whose songs delighted him, cheered him with their music; and the house, awakened from its long sleep, like the sleeping

beauty in the wood, lived, sang, and bloomed like the houses we have long cherished, and in which, when we are forced to leave them, we leave a part of our souls. The servants passed gaily along the fine court-yard; some, belonging to the kitchens, gliding down the stairs, restored but the previous day, as if they had always inhabited the house; others filling the coach-houses, where the equipages, encased and numbered, appeared to have been installed for the last fifty years; and in the stables the horses replied by neighing to the grooms, who spoke to them with much more respect than many servants pay their masters.

The library was divided into two parts on either side of the wall, and contained upwards of two thousand volumes; one division was entirely devoted to novels; and even the one which had been published but the day before was to be seen in its place in all the dignity of its red and gold binding. On the other side of the house, to match with the library, was the conservatory, ornamented with rare flowers, blossoming in china jars; and in the midst of the greenhouse, marvellous alike to sight and smell, was a billiard-table, apparently abandoned during the last hour by the players, who had left the balls on the cloth. One chamber alone had been respected by the magnificent Bertuccio. Before this room, to which you could ascend by the grand, and go out by the back staircase, the servants passed with curiosity, and Bertuccio with terror. At five o'clock precisely, the count arrived before the house at Auteuil, followed by Ali. Bertuccio was awaiting this arrival with impatience, mingled with uneasiness; he hoped for some compliments, while, at the same time, he feared to have frowns. Monte-Cristo descended into the court-yard, walked all over the house, without giving any sign of approbation or displeasure, until he entered his bed-room, situated on the opposite side of the closed room; when he approached a little piece of furniture, made of rosewood, which we remember to have noticed on a previous occasion. "That will at least

horses, accompanied by two mounted gentlemen, arrived at the gate, which opened before them. The carriage drove round, and stopped at the steps, followed by the horsemen. The instant Debray had touched the ground, he was at the carriage-door. He offered his hand to the baroness, who, descending, took it with a peculiarity of manner imperceptible to every one but Monte-Cristo. But nothing escaped the count's notice; and he observed a little note, slipped with an indescribable ease, bespeaking the frequent practice of this manœuvre, from the hand of Madame Danglars to that of the minister's secretary. After his wife the banker descended, pale, as though he had issued from his tomb, instead of his carriage. Madame Danglars threw a rapid and inquiring glance around, which could only be interpreted by Monte-Cristo, embracing the court-yard, the peristyle, and the front of the house; then, repressing a slight emotion, which must have been seen on her countenance if she had permitted her face to become pale, she ascended the steps, saying to Morrel, "Sir, if you were a friend of mine, I should ask you if you would sell your horse."

Morrel smiled with an expression very like a grimace, and then turned round to Monte-Cristo, as if to ask him to extricate him from his embarrassment. The count understood him. "Ah, madame!" he said, "why did you not make that request of me?"—"With you, sir," replied the baroness, "one can wish for nothing, one is so sure to obtain it. If it were so with M. Morrel——"

"Unfortunately," replied the count, "I am witness that M. Morrel cannot give up his horse, his honour being engaged in keeping it."

"How so?"—"He laid a wager he would tame Medea in the space of six months. You understand now that if he were to get rid of it before the time named, he would not only lose his bet, but people would say he was afraid of it; and a brave captain of Spahis cannot risk this, even to gratify a pretty woman, which is, in my opinion, one of the most sacred obligations in the world."

"You see my position, madame," said Morrel, bestowing a grateful smile on Monte-Cristo.

"It seems to me," said Danglars, in his coarse tone, ill-concealed by a forced smile, "that you have already got horses enough." Madame Danglars seldom allowed remarks of this kind to pass unnoticed; but, to the surprise of the young people, she pretended not to hear it, and said nothing. Monte-Cristo smiled at her unusual humility, and showed her two immense porcelain jars, covered with marine plants, of a size and delicacy that could alone emanate from nature. The baroness was astonished. "Why," said she, "you could plant one of the chestnut-trees in the Tuileries inside! How can such enormous jars have been manufactured?"—"Ah, madame!" replied Monte-Cristo, "you must not ask of us, the manufacturers of glass-muslin, such a question. It is the work of another age, constructed by the genii of earth and water."

"How so?—at what period can that have been?"

"I do not know; I have only heard that an emperor of China had an oven built expressly, and that in this oven twelve jars like this were successively baked. Two broke, from the heat of the fire; the other ten were sunk three hundred fathoms deep into the sea. The sea, knowing what was required of her, threw over them her weeds, encircled them with coral, and encrusted them with shells; the whole was cemented by two hundred years beneath these almost impervious depths, for a revolution carried away the emperor who wished to make the trial, and only left the docu-

ments proving the manufacture of the jars and their descent into the sea. At the end of two hundred years the documents were found, and they thought of bringing up the jars. Divers descended in machines, made expressly on the discovery, into the bay where they were thrown; but of ten three only remained, the rest having been borken by the waves. I am fond of these jars, upon which, perhaps, misshapen, frightful monsters have fixed their cold, dull eyes, and in which myriads of small fish have slept, seeking a refuge from the pursuit of their enemies." Meanwhile, Danglars, who had cared little for curiosities, was mechanically tearing off the blossoms of a splendid orange-tree, one after another. When he had finished with the orange-tree, he began at the cactus; but this, not being so easily plucked as the orange-tree, pricked him dreadfully. He shuddered, and rubbed his eyes as though awaking from a dream.

"Sir," said Monte-Cristo to him, "I do not recommend my pictures to you, who possess such splendid paintings; but, nevertheless, here are two by Hobbima, a Paul Potter, a Mieris, two by Gerard Douw, a Raphael, a Vandyke, a Zurbaran, and two or three by Murillo, worth looking at."

"Stay!" said Debray; "I recognise this Hobbima."

"Ah, indeed!"—"Yes; it was proposed for the Museum."

"Which, I believe, does not contain one?" said Monte-Cristo.

"No; and yet they refused to buy it."

"Why?" said Château-Renaud.

"You pretend not to know,—because government was not rich enough,"—"Ah! pardon me!" said Château-Renaud; "I have heard of these things every day during the last eight years, and I cannot understand them yet."

"You will, by-and-by," said Debray.

"I think not," replied Château-Renaud.

I, indeed, invited them here to-day on your account. I will introduce you to them."

"But they appear to speak French with a very pure accent," said Danglars.

"The son has been educated in a college in the south; I believe near Marseilles. You will find him quite enthusiastic."—"Upon what subject?" asked Madame Danglars.

"The French ladies, madame. He has made up his mind to take a wife from Paris."—"A fine idea that of his!" said Danglars, shrugging his shoulders. Madame Danglars looked at her husband with an expression which, at any other time, would have indicated a storm, but for the second time she controlled herself. "The baron appears thoughtful to-day," said Monte-Cristo to her; "are they going to put him in the ministry?"—"Not yet, I think. More likely he has been speculating on the Bourse, and has lost money."

"M. and Madame de Villefort!" cried Baptistin. They entered. M. de Villefort, notwithstanding his self-control, was visibly affected; and when Monte-Cristo touched his hand, he felt it tremble. "Certainly, women alone know how to dissimulate," said Monte-Cristo to himself, glancing at Madame Danglars, who was smiling on the procureur du roi, and embracing his wife. After a short time, the count saw Bertuccio, who, until then, had been occupied on the other side of the house, glide into an adjoining room. He went to him. "What do you want, M. Bertuccio?" said he.

"Your excellency has not stated the number of guests."

"Ah, true!"—"How many covers?"—"Count for yourself."

"Is every one here, your excellency?"—"Yes."

Bertuccio glanced through the door, which was ajar. The count watched him. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed.

"What is the matter?" said the count.

"That woman—that woman!"—"Which?"

"The one with a white dress and so many diamonds—the fair one."

"Madame Danglars?"

"I do not know her name; but it is she, sir, it is she!"

"Whom do you mean?"—"The woman of the garden!—she that was *enciente*—she who was walking while she waited for—" Bertuccio stood at the open door, with his eyes starting and his hair on end.

"Waiting for whom?" Bertuccio, without answering, pointed to Villefort with something of the gesture Macbeth uses to point out Banquo. "Oh, oh!" he at length muttered, "do you see?"

"What? Who?"—"Him!"

"Him!—M. de Villefort, the procureur du roi? Certainly I see him."

"Then I did not kill him!"

"Really, I think you are going mad, good Bertuccio," said the count.

"Then he is not dead!"

"No; you see plainly he is not dead. Instead of striking between the sixth and seventh left rib, as your countrymen do, you must have struck higher or lower; and life is very tenacious in these lawyers, or rather there is no truth in anything you have told me—it was a flight of the imagination, a dream of your fancy. You went to sleep full of thoughts of vengeance; they weighed heavily upon your stomach; you had the nightmare—that's all. Come, calm yourself, and reckon: M. and Madame de Villefort, two; M. and Madame Danglars, four; M. de Château-Renaud, M. Debray, M. Morrel, seven; Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, eight."

"Eight!" repeated Bertuccio.

"Stop! You are in a shocking hurry to be off—you forget one of my guests. Lean a little to the left. Stay! look at M. Andrea Cavalcanti, that young man in a black coat, looking at Murillo's Madonna; now he is turning." This time Bertuccio would have uttered an exclamation, had not a look from Monte-Cristo silenced him. "Benedetto?" he muttered; "fatality!"—"Half-past six o'clock has just struck, M. Bertuccio," said the count, severely; "I ordered dinner at that hour, and I do not like to wait;" and he returned to his guests, while Bertuccio, leaning against the wall, succeeded in reaching the dining-room. Five minutes afterwards the doors of the drawing-room were thrown open, and Bertuccio appearing, said, with a violent effort, "The dinner waits."

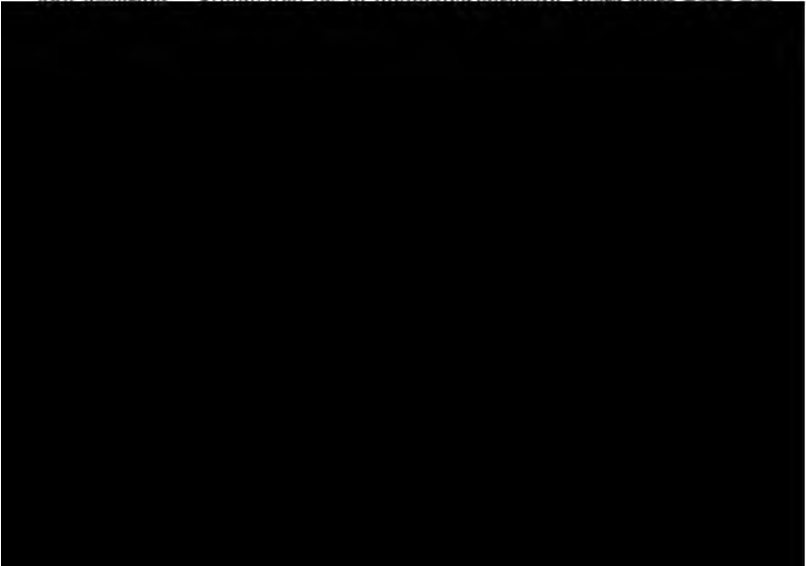
The Count of Monte-Cristo offered his arm to Madame de Villefort. "M. de Villefort," he said, "will you conduct the Baroness Danglars?"

Villefort complied, and they passed on to the dining-room.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE DINNER.

It was evident that one sentiment pervaded the whole of the guests on entering the dining-room. Each one asked himself what strange influence had conducted them to this house; and yet astonished, even uneasy though they were, they still felt they would not like to be absent. The recent events, the solitary and eccentric position of the count, his enormous, nay, almost incredible fortune, should have made men cautious, and have altogether prevented ladies visiting a house where there was no one of their own sex to receive them; and yet both had passed the bounds of prudence



£1,000 upon a dinner for ten persons, but only on the condition of eating pearls, like Cleopatra, or drinking beaten gold, like Lorenzo de' Medici. Monte-Cristo noticed the general astonishment, and began laughing and joking about it. "Gentlemen," he said, "you will admit that, when arrived at a certain degree of fortune, the superfluities of life are all that can be desired; and the ladies will allow that, after having risen to a certain eminence of position, the ideal alone can be more exalted. Now, to follow out this reasoning, what is the marvellous?—that which we do not understand. What is it that we really desire?—that which we cannot obtain. Now, to see things which I cannot understand, to procure impossibilities, these are the study of my life. I gratify my wishes by two means—my will and my money. I take as much interest in the pursuit of some whim as you do, M. Danglars, in forming a new railway line; you, M. de Villefort, in condemning a culprit to death: you, M. Debray, in pacifying a kingdom; you, M. de Château-Renaud, in pleasing a woman; and you, Morrel, in breaking a horse that no one can ride. For example, you see these two fish; one brought fifty leagues beyond St. Petersburg, the other five leagues from Naples. Is it not amusing to see them both on the same table?"

"What are the two fish?" asked Danglars.—"M. Château-Renaud, who has lived in Russia, will tell you the name of one, and Major Cavalcanti, who is an Italian, will tell you the name of the other."

"This one is, I think, a *sterlet*," said Château-Renaud.

"And that one, if I mistake not, a lamprey."—"Just so. Now, M. Danglars, ask these gentlemen where they are caught."

"*Sterlets*," said Château-Renaud, "are only found in the Volga."

"And," said Cavalcanti, "I know that Lake Fusaro alone supplies lampreys of that size."

"Exactly; one comes from the Volga, and the other from Lake Fusaro."

"Impossible!" cried all the guests simultaneously.

"Well, this is just what amuses me," said Monte-Cristo. "I am like Nero—*cupitor impossibilium*; and that it is which is amusing you at this moment. This fish, which seems so exquisite to you, is very likely no better than perch or salmon; but it seemed impossible to procure it, and here it is."

"But how could you have these fish brought to France?"

"Oh, nothing more easy. Each fish was brought over in a cask—one filled with river herbs and weeds, the other with rushes and lake plants; they were placed in a wagon built on purpose; and thus the *sterlet* lived twelve days, the lamprey eight; and both were alive when my cook seized them, killing one with milk and the other with wine. You do not believe me, M. Danglars!"

"I cannot help doubting," answered Danglars, with his stupid smile.

"Baptistin," said the count, "have the other fish brought in—the *sterlet* and the lamprey which came in the other casks, and which are yet alive." Danglars opened his bewildered eyes; the company clapped their hands. Four servants carried in two casks covered with aquatic plants, and in each of which was breathing a fish similar to those on the table.

"But why have two of each sort?" asked Danglars.

"Merely because one might have died," carelessly answered Monte-Cristo.—"You are certainly an extraordinary man," said Danglars; "and philosophers may well say it is a fine thing to be rich."

"And to have ideas," added Madame Danglars.

"Oh, do not give me credit for this, madame; it was done by the Romans, who much esteemed them; and Pliny relates that they sent

slaves from Ostia to Rome, who carried on their heads fish which he calls the *mulus*, and which, from the description, must probably be the gold-fish. It was also considered a luxury to have them alive, it being an amusing sight to see them die ; for, when dying, they change colour three or four times, and, like the rainbow when it disappears, pass through all the prismatic shades ; after which they were sent to the kitchen. Their agony formed part of their merit : if they were not seen alive, they were despised when dead."

"Yes," said Debray ; "but then Ostia is only a few leagues from Rome."

"True," said Monte-Cristo ; "but what would be the use of living 1800 years after Lucullus, if we can do no better than he could ?" The two Cavalcanti opened their enormous eyes, but had the good sense not to say anything. "All this is very extraordinary," said Château-Renaud ; "still, what I admire the most, I confess, is the marvellous promptitude with which your orders are executed. Is it not true that you only bought this house five or six days ago ?"—"Certainly not longer."—"Well, I am sure it is quite transformed since last week. If I remember rightly, it had another entrance, and the courtyard was paved and empty ; while to-day we have a splendid lawn, bordered by trees which appear to be a hundred years old."—"Why not ? I am fond of grass and shade," said Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," said Madame de Villefort, "the door was towards the road before ; and on the day of my miraculous escape you brought me into the house from the road, I remember."—"Yes, madame," said Monte-Cristo ; "but I preferred having an entrance which would allow me to see the Bois de Boulogne over my gate."

"In four days !" said Morrel ; "it is extraordinary !"

"Indeed," said Château-Renaud, "it seems quite miraculous to make a

"Can we account for instinct?" said Monte-Cristo. "Are there not some places where we seem to breathe sadness?—why, we cannot tell. It is a chain of recollections—an idea which carries you back to other times, to other places—which, very likely, have no connexion with the present time and place. And there is something in this room which reminds me forcibly of the chamber of the Marchioness de Ganges or Desdemona. Stay, since we have finished dinner, I will show it to you, and then we will take coffee in the garden. After dinner, the play." Monte-Cristo looked inquiringly at his guests. Madame de Villefort rose, Monte-Cristo did the same, and the rest followed their example. Villefort and Madame Danglars remained for a moment, as if rooted to their seats; they interrogated each other with cold glazed eyes. "Did you hear?" said Madame Danglars.

"We must go," replied Villefort, offering his arm. Every one else was already scattered in different parts of the house, urged by curiosity; for they thought the visit would not be limited to the one room, and that, at the same time, they would obtain a view of the rest of the building, of which Monte-Cristo had created a palace. Each one went out by the open doors. Monte-Cristo waited for the two who remained; then, when they had passed, he closed the march with a smile, which, if they could have understood it, would have alarmed them much more than a visit to the room they were about to enter. They therefore began by walking through the apartments, many of which were fitted up in the Eastern style, with cushions and divans instead of beds, and pipes instead of furniture. The drawing-rooms were decorated with the rarest pictures, by the old masters; the boudoirs hung with draperies from China, of fanciful colours, fantastic design, and wonderful texture. At length they arrived at the famous room. There was nothing particular about it, excepting that, although daylight had disappeared, it was not lighted, and everything in it remained antique, while the rest of the rooms had been re-decorated. These two causes were enough to give it a gloomy tinge. "Oh!" cried Madame de Villefort, "it is really frightful." Madame Danglars tried to utter a few words, but was not heard. Many observations were made, the result of which was the unanimous opinion that there was a sinister appearance in the room. "Is it not so?" asked Monte-Cristo. "Look at that large clumsy bed, hung with such gloomy, blood-coloured drapery! And those two crayon portraits, that have faded, from the damp; do they not seem to say, with their pale lips and staring eyes, 'We have seen!'" Villefort became livid; Madame Danglars fell into a long seat placed near the chimney. "Oh!" said Madame de Villefort, smiling, "are you courageous enough to sit down upon the very seat perhaps upon which the crime was committed?" Madame Danglars rose suddenly.

"And then," said Monte-Cristo, "this is not all."—"What is there more?" said Debray, who had not failed to notice the agitation of Madame Danglars.

"Ah! what else is there?" said Danglars; "for, at present, I cannot say that I have seen anything extraordinary. What do you say, M. Cavalcanti?"—"Ah!" said he, "we have at Pisa the tower of Ugolino; at Ferrara, the prison of Tasso; at Rimini, the room of Francesca and Paolo."

"Yes, but you have not this little staircase," said Monte-Cristo, opening a door concealed by the drapery. "Look at it, and tell me what you think of it."—"What a wicked-looking, crooked staircase," said Château-Renaud, smiling.

"I do not know whether the wine of Chios produces melancholy, but certainly everything appears to me black in this house," said Debray.

Ever since Valentine's dowry had been mentioned, Morrel had been silent and sad. "Can you imagine," said Monte-Cristo, "some Othello or Abbé de Ganges, one stormy, dark night, descending these stairs step by step, carrying a lord, which he wishes to hide from the sight of man, if not from God?" Madame Danglars half fainted on the arm of Villefort, who was obliged to support himself against the wall. "Ah, Madame," cried Debray, "what is the matter with you? how pale you look!"—"This is what is the matter with her," said Madame de Villefort; "it is very simple: M. de Monte-Cristo is relating horrible stories to us, doubtless intending to frighten us to death."

"Yes," said Villefort, "really, count, you frighten the ladies."

"What is the matter?" asked Debray, in a whisper, of Madame Danglars.—"Nothing," she replied, with a violent effort. "I want air: that is all."—"Will you come into the garden?" said Debray, advancing towards the back staircase.

"No, no!" she answered, "I would rather remain here."

"Are you really frightened, Madame?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Oh, no, sir," said Madame Danglars; "but you suppose scenes in a manner which gives them the appearance of reality."—"Ah, yes!" said Monte-Cristo smiling; "it is all a matter of the imagination. Why should we not imagine this the apartment of an honest family-woman? And this bed with red hangings, a bed visited by the goddess Lucina? And that mysterious staircase, the passage through which, not to disturb their sleep, the doctor and nurse pass, or even the father carrying the sleeping child? Here Madame Danglars, instead of being calmed by the soft picture,

"Your declaration!" said Villefort.—"Yes, before witnesses."

"Oh, this is very interesting," said Debray; "if there really has been a crime, we will investigate it."—"There has been a crime," said Monte-Cristo. "Come this way, gentlemen; come, M. Villefort, for a declaration to be available, should be made before the competent authorities." He then took Villefort's arm, and, at the same time, holding that of Madame Danglars under his own, he dragged the procureur to the plantain-tree, where the shade was thickest. All the other guests followed. "Stay," said Monte-Cristo, "here, in this very spot (and he stamped upon the ground), 'I had the earth dug up and fresh mould put in, to refresh these old trees; well, my man, digging, found a box, or rather the iron-work of a box, in the midst of which was the skeleton of a newly-born infant.'" Monte-Cristo felt the arm of Madame Danglars stiffen, while that of Villefort trembled. "A newly-born infant!" repeated Debray; "this affair becomes serious!"

"Well," said Château-Renaud, "I was not wrong just now, then, when I said that houses had souls and faces like men, and that their exteriors carried the impress of their characters. This house was gloomy because it was remorseful; it was remorseful because it concealed a crime."—"Who said it was a crime?" asked Villefort, with a last effort.

"How? is it not a crime to bury a living child in a garden?" cried Monte-Cristo. "And pray what do you call such an action?"

"But who said it was buried alive?"—"Why bury it there if it were dead? This garden has never been a cemetery."

"What is done to infanticides in this country?" asked Major Cavalcanti. innocently.—"Oh, their heads are soon cut off," said Danglars.

"Ah! indeed!" said Cavalcanti.

"I think so: am I not right, M. de Villefort?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Yes, count," replied De Villefort, in a voice now scarcely human.

Monte-Cristo saw that the two persons for whom he had prepared this scheme could scarcely bear it, so, not wishing to carry it too far, he said, "Come, gentlemen, some coffee, we seem to have forgotten it;" and he conducted the guests back to the table on the lawn.

"Indeed, count," said Madame Danglars, "I am ashamed to own it, but all your frightful stories have so upset me, that I must beg you to let me sit down;" and she fell into a chair. Monte-Cristo bowed, and went to Madame de Villefort. "I think Madame Danglars again requires your bottle," he said. But before Madame de Villefort could reach her friend, the *procureur* had found time to whisper to Madame Danglars, "I must speak to you."

"When?"—"To-morrow."

"Where?"—"In my office, or in the court, if you like, that is the surest place."

"I will go."—At this moment Madame de Villefort approached. "Thanks, my dear friend," said Madame Danglars, trying to smile; "it is over now, and I am much better."

CHAPTER LXIV

THE BEGGAR.

THE evening passed on; Madame de Villefort expressed a desire to return to Paris, which Madame Danglars had not dared to do, notwithstanding the uneasiness she experienced. On his wife's request, M. de

Villefort was the first to give the signal of departure. He offered a seat in his landau to Madame Danglars, that she might be under the care of his wife. As for M. Danglars, absorbed in an interesting conversation with M. Cavalcanti, he paid no attention to anything that was passing. While Monte-Cristo had begged the smelling-bottle of Madame de Villefort, he had remarked the approach of Villefort to Madame Danglars, and he soon guessed all that had passed between them, though the words had been uttered in so low a voice as hardly to be heard by Madame Danglars. Without opposing their arrangements, he allowed Morrel, Château-Renaud, and Debray to leave on horseback, and the ladies in M. de Villefort's carriage. Danglars, more and more delighted with Major Cavalcanti, had offered him a seat in his carriage. Andrea Cavalcanti found his tilbury waiting at the door; the groom, in every respect a caricature of the English fashion, was standing on tiptoes to hold a large iron-grey horse. Andrea had spoken very little during dinner; he was an intelligent lad, and he feared to utter some absurdity before so many grand people, amongst whom he saw with dilating eyes the procureur du roi. Then he had been seized upon by Danglars, who, taking a rapid glance at the stiff-necked old major and his modest son, and taking into consideration the hospitality of the count, made up his mind that he was in the society of some nabob come to Paris to finish the worldly education of his only son. He contemplated with unspeakable delight the large diamond which shone on the major's little finger; for the major, like a prudent man, in case of any accident happening to his bank-notes, had immediately converted them into articles of value. Then, after dinner, on the pretext of business, he questioned the father and son upon their mode of living; and the father and son, previously informed that it was through Danglars the one was to receive his 48,000 francs and the other 50,000 livres annually, they

who, instead of bringing the tilbury to the steps of the house, had taken it to the outer door, thus giving him the trouble of walking thirty steps to reach it. The groom heard him with humility, took the bit of the impatient animal with his left hand, and with the right held out the reins to Andrea, who, taking them from him, rested his polished boot lightly on the step. At that moment a hand touched his shoulder. The young man turned round, thinking that Danglars or Monte-Cristo had forgotten something they wished to tell him, and had returned just as they were starting. But instead of either of these, he saw nothing but a strange face, sun-burnt, and encircled by a beard, with eyes brilliant as carbuncles, and a smile upon the mouth which displayed a perfect set of white teeth, pointed and sharp as the wolf's or jackal's. A red handkerchief encircled his grey head; torn and filthy garments covered his large bony limbs, which seemed as though, like those of a skeleton, they would rattle as he walked; and the hand with which he leant upon the young man's shoulder, and which was the first thing Andrea saw, seemed of a gigantic size. Did the young man recognize that face by the light of the lantern in his tilbury, or was he merely struck with the horrible appearance of his interrogator? We cannot say; but only relate the fact that he shuddered and stepped back suddenly. "What do you want of me?" he asked.

"Pardon me, my friend, if I disturb you," said the man with the red handkerchief, "but I want to speak to you."—"You have no right to beg at night," said the groom, endeavouring to rid his master of the troublesome intruder.

"I am not begging, my fine fellow," said the unknown to the servant, with so ironical an expression of eye, and so frightful a smile, that he withdrew; "I only wish to say two or three words to your master, who gave me a commission to execute about a fortnight ago."—"Come," said Andrea, with sufficient nerve for his servant not to perceive his agitation, "what do you want? Speak quickly, friend."

The man said, in a low voice: "I wish—I wish you to spare me the walk back to Paris. I am very tired, and not having eaten so good a dinner as you have, I can scarcely support myself." The young man shuddered at this strange familiarity. "Tell me," he said—"tell me what you want?"

"Well, then, I want you to take me up in your fine carriage, and carry me back." Andrea turned pale, but said nothing.

"Yes!" said the man, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking impudently at the youth; "I have taken the whim into my head; do you understand, Master Benedetto?"

At this name, no doubt, the young man reflected a little, for he went towards his groom, saying—"This man is right; I did indeed charge him with a commission, the result of which he must tell me; walk to the barrier, there take a cab, that you may not be too late." The surprised groom retired.—"Let me at least reach a shady spot," said Andrea.

"Oh! as for that, I'll conduct you to a splendid spot," said the man with the handkerchief; and, taking the horse's bit, he led the tilbury to a place where it was certainly impossible for any one to witness the honour that Andrea conferred upon him.

"Don't think I want the honour of riding in your fine carriage," said he; "oh, no, it's only because I am tired, and also because I have a little business to talk over with you."—"Come, step in," said the young man. It was a pity this scene had not occurred in daylight, for it was curious to see this rascal throwing himself heavily down on the cushion beside the

young and elegant driver of the tilbury. Andrea drove past the last house in the village without saving a word to his companion, who smiled complacently, as though well pleased to find himself travelling in so comfortable a vehicle. Once out of Auteuil, Andrea looked around, in order to assure himself that he could neither be seen nor heard; and then, stopping the horse and crossing his arms before the man, he asked,—“Now, tell me why you come to disturb my tranquillity?”—“Let me ask you why you deceived me?”

“How have I deceived you?”—“How! do you ask? When we parted at the Pont du Far, you told me you were going to travel through Piedmont and Tuscany; but instead of that, you come to Paris.”

“How does that annoy you?”

“It does not; on the contrary, I think it will answer my purpose.”

“So,” said Andrea, “you are speculating upon me?”

“What fine words he uses!”

“I warn you, Master Caderousse, that you are mistaken.”—“Well, well, don’t be angry, my boy; you know well enough what it is to be unfortunate; and misfortunes make us jealous. I thought you were earning a living in Tuscany or Piedmont by acting as *facchino* or *cicerone*; and I pitied you sincerely, as I would a child of my own. You know I always did call you my child.”

“Come, come, what then?”—“Patience! patience!”

“I am patient, but go on.”—“All at once I see you pass through the barrier with a groom, a tilbury, and fine new clothes. You must have discovered a mine, or else become a stockbroker.”

“So that, as you acknowledge, you are jealous?”—“No, I am pleased—so pleased that I wished to congratulate you; but as I am not quite properly dressed, I chose my opportunity, that I might not compromise

like yours on my head, rags on my back, and worn-out shoes on my feet, you would not have known me."—"You wrong me, my boy; now I have found you, nothing prevents my being as well-dressed as any one, knowing, as I do, the goodness of your heart. If you have two coats you will give me one of them. I used to divide my soup and beans with you when you were hungry."

"True," said Andrea.

"What an appetite you used to have! is it as good now?"

"Oh, yes," replied Andrea, laughing.

"How did you come to be dining with that prince whose house you have just left?"—"He is not a prince; simply a count."

"A count, and a rich one too, eh?"—"Yes; but you had better not have anything to say to him, for he is not a very good-tempered gentleman."

"Oh! be satisfied! I have no design upon your count, and you shall have him all to yourself. But," said Caderousse, again smiling with the disagreeable expression he had before assumed, "you must pay for it—you understand?"—"Well, what do you want?"

"I think that with a hundred francs per month——"

"Well?"—"I could live——"

"Upon a hundred francs!"

"Come—you understand me; but that with——"

"With?"—"With a hundred and fifty francs I should be quite happy."

"Here are two hundred," said Andrea; and he placed ten louis d'or in the hand of Caderousse.—"Good!" said Caderousse.

"Apply to the steward on the first day of every month, and you will receive the same sum."—"There now, again you degrade me."

"How so?"—"By making me apply to the servants, when I want to transact business with you alone."

"Well, be it so, then. Take it from me then, and so long at least as I receive my income, you shall be paid yours."

"Come come; I always said you were a fine fellow, and it is a blessing when good fortune happens to such as you. But tell me all about it?"

"Why do you wish to know?" asked Cavalcanti.

"What! do you again defy me?"

"No; the fact is, I have found my father."

"What! a real father?"—"Yes, so long as he pays me——"

"You'll honour and believe him—that's right. What is his name?"

"Major Cavalcanti?"—"Is he pleased with you?"

"So far I have appeared to answer his purpose."

"And who found this father for you?"

"The count of Monte-Cristo."

"The man whose house you have just left?"—"Yes."

"I wish you would try and find me a situation with him as grandfather, since he holds the money-chest!"—"Well, I will mention you to him. Meanwhile, what are you going to do?"

"I?"—"Yes, you."

"It is very kind of you to trouble yourself about me."

"Since you interest yourself in my affairs, I think it is now my turn to ask you some questions."

"Ah, true! Well; I shall rent a room in some respectable house, wear a decent coat, shave every day, and go and read the papers in a café. Then, in the evening, I will go to the theatre; I shall look like some re-

tired baker. This is my wish."—"Come, if you will only put this scheme into execution, and be steady, nothing could be better."

"Do you think so, M. Bossuet? And you—what will you become? A peer of France?"—"Ah!" said Andrea, "who knows?"

"Major Cavalcanti is already one, perhaps; but then, hereditary rank is abolished."—"No politics, Caderousse! And now that you have all you want, and that we understand each other, jump down from the tilbury and disappear."

"Not at all, my good friend."—"How! not at all?"

"Why, just think for a moment; with this red handkerchief on my head, with scarcely any shoes, no papers, and ten gold napoleons in my pocket, without reckoning what was there before—making in all about two hundred francs; why, I should certainly be arrested at the barriers! Then, to justify myself, I should say that you gave me the money; this would cause inquiries; it would be found that I left Toulon without giving due notice, and I should then be reconducted to the shores of the Mediterranean. Then I should become simply No. 106, and good-bye to my dream of resembling the retired baker! No, no, my boy; I prefer remaining honourably in the capital." Andrea scowled. Certainly, as he had himself owned, the reputed son of Major Cavalcanti was a wilful fellow. He drew up for a minute, threw a rapid glance around him; and, after doing so, his hand fell instantly into his pocket, where it began playing with a pistol. But, meanwhile, Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off his companion, passed his hand behind his back, and unclasped a long Spanish knife, which he always carried with him, to be ready in case of need. The two friends, as we see, were worthy of and understood one another. Andrea's hand left his pocket inoffensively, and was carried up to the red moustachio, which it played with for some time. "Good Cade-

CHAPTER LXV.

A CONJUGAL SCENE.

AT the Place Louis XV. the three young people separated—that is to say, Morrel went to the Boulevards, Château-Renaud to the Pont de la Révolution, and Debray to the Quai. Most probably Morrel and Château-Renaud returned to their “domestic hearths,” as they say in the gallery of the Chamber in well-turned speeches, and in the theatre of the Rue Richelieu in well-written pieces; but it was not the case with Debray. When he reached the wicket of the Louvre, he turned to the left, galloped across the Carrousel, passed through the Rue Saint-Roch, and, issuing from the Rue de la Michodière, he arrived at M. Danglars’ door just at the same time that Villefort’s landau, after having deposited him and his wife at the Faubourg St. Honoré, stopped to leave the baroness at her own house. Debray, with the air of a man familiar with the house, entered first in to the court, threw his bridle into the hands of a footman, and returned to the door to receive Madame Danglars, to whom he offered his arm, to conduct her to her apartments. The gate once closed, and Debray and the baroness alone in the court, he asked,—“What was the matter with you, Hermine? and why were you so affected at that story, or rather fable, which the count related?”—“Because I have been in such shocking spirits all the evening, my friend,” said the baroness.

“No, Hermine,” replied Debray; “you cannot make me believe that; on the contrary, you were in excellent spirits when you arrived at the count’s. M. Danglars was disagreeable, certainly; but I know how much you care for his ill-humour. Some one has vexed you; I will allow no one to annoy you.”—“You are deceived, Lucien, I assure you,” replied Madame Danglars; “and what I have told you is really the case, added to the ill-humour you remarked, but which I did not think it worth while to allude to.” It was evident that Madame Danglars was suffering from that nervous irritability which women frequently cannot account for even to themselves; or that, as Debray had guessed, she had experienced some secret agitation that she would not acknowledge to any one. Being a man who knew that the former of these symptoms was one of the elements of female life, he did not then press his inquiries, but waited for a more appropriate opportunity when he should again interrogate her, or receive an avowal *proprio motu*. At the door of her apartment the baroness met Mademoiselle Cornélie, her confidential lady’s maid. “What is my daughter doing?” asked Madame Danglars.

“She practised all the evening, and then went to bed,” replied Mademoiselle Cornélie. “Yet I think I heard her piano.”

“It is Mademoiselle Louise d’Arnilly, who is playing while Mademoiselle Danglars is in bed.”—“Well,” said Madame Danglars, “come and undress me.” They entered the bed-room. Debray stretched himself upon a large couch, and Madame Danglars passed into her dressing-room with Mademoiselle Cornélie. “My dear M. Lucien,” said Madame Danglars, through the door, “you are always complaining that Eugénie will not address a word to you.”

“Madame,” said Lucien, playing with a little dog, who, recognising him as a friend of the house, expected to be caressed, “I am not the only one who makes similar complaints; I think I heard Morcerf say that he could not extract a word from his *fiancée*.”—“True,” said Madame Danglars; “but yet I think this will all pass off, and that you will one day see her enter your study.”

"My study?"—"At least that of the minister."

"Why so?"—"To ask for an engagement at the Opera. Really, I never saw such an infatuation for music; it is quite ridiculous for a young lady of fashion." Debray smiled. "Well," said he, "let her come, with your consent and that of the baron, and we will try and give her an engagement, though we are very poor to pay such talent as hers."—"Go, Cornélie," said Madame Danglars. "I do not require you any longer."

Cornélie obeyed; and the next minute Madame Danglars left her room in a charming loose dress, and came and sat down close to Debray. Then, thoughtful, she began to caress the little spaniel. Lucien looked at her for a moment in silence. "Come, Hermine," he said, after a short time, "answer candidly,—something vexes you, is it not so?"

"Nothing," answered the baroness.

And yet, as she could scarcely breathe, she rose and went towards a looking-glass. "I am frightful to-night," she said. Debray rose, smiling, and was about to contradict the baroness upon this latter point, when the door opened suddenly. M. Danglars appeared; Debray reseated himself. At the noise of the door Madame Danglars turned round, and looked upon her husband with an astonishment she took no trouble to conceal. "Good evening, madame!" said the banker; "good evening, M. Debray!"

Probably the baroness thought this unexpected visit signified a desire to repair the sharp words he had uttered during the day. Assuming a dignified air, she turned round to Debray, without answering her husband: "Read me something, M. Debray," she said. Debray, who was slightly disturbed at this visit, recovered himself when he saw the calmness of the baroness, and took up a book marked by a mother-of-pearl knife inlaid with gold. "Excuse me," said the banker, "but you will tire yourself, baroness, by such late hours, and M. Debray lives some distance from

door, like Nathan in "Athalie."—"It is extraordinary," he said, when the door was closed behind him, "how easily these husbands, whom we ridicule, gain an advantage over us."

Lucien having left, Danglars took his place on the sofa, closed the open book, and placing himself in a dreadfully dictatorial attitude, he began playing with the dog; but the animal, not liking him so well as Debray, and attempting to bite him, Danglars seized him by the skin of his neck, and threw him to the other side of the room upon a couch. The animal uttered a cry during the transit, but, arrived at its destination, it crouched behind the cushions, and, stupefied at such unusual treatment, remained silent and motionless. "Do you know, sir," asked the baroness, "that you are improving? Generally you are only rude, but to-night you are brutal."—"It is because I am in a worse humour than usual," replied Danglars. Hermine looked at the banker with supreme disdain. These glances frequently exasperated the pride of Danglars, but this evening he took no notice of them.

"And what have I to do with your ill-humour?" said the baroness, irritated at the impassability of her husband; "do these things concern me? Keep your ill-humour at home in your chests: or, since you have clerks whom you pay, vent it upon them."—"Not so," replied Danglars; "your advice is wrong, so I shall not follow it. My chests are my Pactolus, as, I think, M. Demoustier says, and I will not retard its course, or disturb its calm. My clerks are honest men, who earn my fortune, whom I pay much below their deserts, if I may value them according to what they bring in; therefore I shall not get into a passion with them; those with whom I will be in a passion are those who eat my dinners, mount my horses, and exhaust my fortune."

"And pray who are the persons who exhaust your fortune? Explain yourself more clearly, I beg, sir."—"Oh, make yourself easy!—I am not speaking riddles, and you will soon know what I mean. The people who exhaust my fortune are those who draw out 700,000 francs in the course of an hour."

"I do not understand you, sir," said the baroness, trying to disguise the agitation of her voice and the flush of her face. "You understand me perfectly, on the contrary," said Danglars: "but, if you will persist, I will tell you that I have just lost 700,000 francs upon the Spanish loan."

"And pray," asked the baroness, "am I responsible for this loss?"

"Why not?"—"Is it my fault you have lost 700,000 francs?"

"Certainly it is not mine."—"Once for all, sir," replied the baroness, sharply, "I tell you I will not hear cash named; it is a style of language I never heard in the house of my parents or in that of my first husband."

"Oh! I can well believe that, for neither of them was worth a penny."

"The better reason for my not being conversant with the slang of the bank, which is here dinning in my ears from morning to night; that noise of crowns jingling, which are constantly being counted and re-counted, is odious to me. I only know one thing I dislike more, which is the sound of your voice."

"Really!" said Danglars. "Well, this surprises me, for I thought you took the liveliest interest in my affairs!"

"I! What could put such an idea into your head?"

"Yourself!"—"Ah!—what next?"—"Most assuredly."

"I should like to know upon what occasion?"—"Ah, that is very easily done! Last February you were the first who told me of the Haytian funds. You had dreamt that a ship had entered the harbour at Havre,

that this ship brought news that a payment we had looked upon as lost was going to be made. I know how clear-sighted your dreams are ; I therefore purchased immediately as many shares as I could of the Haytian debt, and I gained 400,000 francs by it, of which 100,000 have been honestly paid to you. You spent it as you pleased, that was your business. In March there was a question about a grant to a railway. Three companies presented themselves, each offering equal securities. You told me that your instinct,—and although you pretend to know nothing about speculations, I think, on the contrary, that your comprehension is very clear upon certain affairs,—well, you told me that your instinct led you to believe the grant would be given to the company called the Southern. I bought two-thirds of the shares of that company ; as you had foreseen, the shares became of triple value, and I picked up a million (£40,000), from which 250,000 francs were paid to you for pin-money. How have you spent this 250,000 francs ?—it is no business of mine."

"When are you coming to the point?" cried the baroness, shivering with anger and impatience. "Patience, madame, I am coming to it."

"That's fortunate !"

"In April you went to dine at the minister's. You heard a private conversation respecting the affairs of Spain—on the expulsion of Don Carlos. I bought some Spanish shares. The expulsion took place and I pocketed 600,000 francs the day Charles V. repassed the Bidassoa. Of these 600,000 francs you took 50,000 crowns. They were yours, you disposed of them according to your fancy, and I asked no questions ; but it is not the less true that you have this year received 500,000 livres."

"Well, sir, and what then ?"

"Ah, yes, it was just after this that you spoiled everything !"

"Really, your manner of speaking——"

the Théâtre Italien ; at the same time I felt inclined to learn dancing of the *danseuse* who acquired such a reputation in London. This cost me, on your account and mine, 100,000 francs. I said nothing, for we must have peace in the house ; and 100,000 francs for a lady and gentleman to be properly instructed in music and dancing are not too much. Well, you soon become tired of singing, and you take a fancy to study diplomacy with the minister's secretary. You understand : it signifies nothing to me so long as you pay for your lessons out of your own cash-box. But to-day I find you are drawing on mine, and that your apprenticeship may cost me 700,000 francs per month. Stop there, madame ! for this cannot last. Either the diplomatist must give his lessons gratis, and I will tolerate him, or he must never set his foot again in my house ;—do you understand, madame ?”——“ Oh, this is too much,” cried Hermine, choking ; “ you are worse than despicable.”

“ But,” continued Danglars, “ I find you did not even pause there——”
“ Insults !”

“ You are right ; let us leave these facts alone, and reason coolly. I have never interfered in your affairs, excepting for your good ; treat me in the same way. You say you have nothing to do with my cash-box. Be it so. Do as you like with your own, but do not fill or empty mine. Besides, how do I know that this was not a political trick ; that the minister, enraged at seeing me in the opposition, and jealous of the popular sympathy I excite, has not concerted with M. Debray to ruin me ?”

“ A probable thing !”——“ Why not ? Who ever heard of such an occurrence as this ?—A false telegraphic despatch—it is almost impossible for signals to have been made different to those of the two last telegrams. It was done on purpose for me, I am sure of it.”

“ Sir,” said the baroness, humbly, “ are you not aware that the man employed there was dismissed, that they talked of going to law with him, that orders were issued to arrest him, and that this order would have been put into execution if he had not escaped their researches by a flight which proves either his madness or his culpability ? It was a mistake.”

“ Yes, which made fools laugh, which caused the minister to have a sleepless night, which has caused the minister's secretaries to blacken several sheets of paper, but which has cost me 700,000 francs.”

“ But, sir,” said Hermine, suddenly, “ if all this is, as you say, caused by M. Debray, why, instead of going direct to him, do you come and tell me of it ? Why to accuse the man do you address the woman ?”

“ Do I know M. Debray ?—do I wish to know him ?—do I wish to know that he gives advice ?—do I wish to follow it ?—do I speculate ? No ; you do all this, not I.”

“ Still it seems to me that, as you profit by it——”

Danglars shrugged his shoulders. “ Foolish creature,” he exclaimed. “ Women fancy they have talent because they have managed two or three intrigues without being the talk of Paris ! But know that if you had even hidden your irregularities from your husband, which is but the commencement of the art—for generally husbands *will* not see—you would then have been but a faint imitation of most of your friends among the women of the world. But it has not been so with me,—I see, and always have seen, during the last sixteen years. You may, perhaps, have hidden a thought ; but not a step, not an action, not a fault, has escaped me ; while you flattered yourself upon your address, and firmly believed you had deceived me. What has been the result ?—that, thanks to my pretended ignorance, there are none of your friends, from M. de Villefort to M. Debray, who

"Then you believe the newspapers?"—"I?—not the least in the world; only I fancied that the honest *Messenger* was an exception to the rule, and that it only announced telegraphic despatches."

"Well! this is what puzzles me," replied Danglars; "the news of the return of Don Carlos was brought by telegraph."—"So that," said Monte-Cristo, "you have lost nearly 1,700,000 francs this month."

"Not nearly, indeed; that is exactly my loss."—"Diable!" said Monte-Cristo, compassionately, "it is a hard blow for a third-rate fortune."

"Third-rate," said Danglars, rather humbled, "what do you mean by that?"—"Certainly," continued Monte-Cristo, "I make three assortments in fortune—first-rate, second-rate, and third-rate fortunes. I call those first-rate which are composed of treasures one possesses under one's hand, such as mines, lands, and funded property, in such states as France, Austria, and England, provided these treasures and property form a total of about a hundred millions; I call those second-rate fortunes, gained by manufacturing enterprises, joint-stock companies, viceroalties, and principalities, not drawing more than 1,500,000 francs, the whole forming a capital of about fifty millions; finally, I call those third-rate fortunes, composed of a fluctuating capital, dependent upon the will of others, or upon chances which a bankruptcy involves or a false telegram shakes: such as banks, speculations of the day—in fact, all operations under the influence of greater or less mischances, the whole bringing in a real or fictitious capital of about fifteen millions. I think this is about your position, is it not?"

"Confound it! yes!" replied Danglars.

"The result, then, of six more such months as this would be to reduce the third-rate house to despair."—"Oh!" said Danglars, becoming very pale, "how you are running on!"

Danglars, with the air of a mountebank sounding out his own praises :
 "to involve me, three governments must crumble to dust."

"Well ! such things have been !"——"That there should be a famine !"

"Recollect the seven fat and the seven lean kine."

"Or, that the sea should become dry, as in the days of Pharaoh ; and even then my vessels would become caravans."

"So much the better, I congratulate you, my dear M. Danglars," said Monte-Cristo ; "I see I was deceived, and that you belong to the class of second-rate fortunes."——"I think I may aspire to that honour," said Danglars with a smile, which reminded Monte-Cristo of one of those sickly moons which bad artists are so fond of daubing into their pictures of ruins ; "but, while we are speaking of business," he added, pleased to find an opportunity of changing the subject, "tell me what I am to do for M. Cavalcanti."

"Give him money, if he is recommended to you, and the recommendation seems good."——"Excellent ! he presented himself this morning with a bond of 40,000 francs, payable at sight, on you, signed by Busoni, and returned by you to me, with your indorsement ; of course, I immediately counted him over the forty bank-notes."

Monte-Cristo nodded his head in token of assent. "But that is not all," continued Danglars ; "he has opened an account with my house for his son."——"May I ask how much he allows the young man ?"

"Five thousand francs per month."

"Sixty thousand francs per year. I thought I was right in believing that Cavalcanti to be a stingy fellow. How can a young man live upon 5,000 francs a month ?"——"But you understand that if the young man should want a few thousands more——"

"Do not advance it ; the father will never repay it ; you do not know these ultramontane millionaires ; they are regular misers. And by whom were they recommended to you ?"

"Oh, by the house of Fenzi, one of the best in Florence."——"I do not mean to say you will lose, but, nevertheless, mind you hold to the terms of the agreement."——"Would you not trust the Cavalcanti ?"

"I ? oh, I would advance six millions on his signature. I was only speaking in reference to the second-rate fortunes we were mentioning just now."——"And with all this, how plain he is ! I should never have taken him for anything more than a mere major."

"And you would have flattered him, for certainly, as you say, he has no manner. The first time I saw him he appeared to me like an old lieutenant who had grown mouldy beneath his epaulette. But all the Italians are the same ; they are like old Jews when they are not glittering in Oriental splendour."

"The young man is better," said Danglars.

"Yes ; a little nervous, perhaps, but, upon the whole, he appeared tolerable. I was uneasy about him."——"Why ?"

"Because you met him at my house, just after his introduction into the world, as they told me. He has been travelling with a very severe tutor, and had never been to Paris before."——"Ah, I believe noblemen marry amongst themselves, do they not ?" asked Danglars, carelessly ; "they like to unite their fortunes."

"It is usual, certainly ; but Cavalcanti is an original who does nothing like other people. I cannot help thinking he has brought his son to France to choose a wife."

"Do you think so ?"——"I am sure of it."

"And you have heard his fortune mentioned?"—"Nothing else was talked of: only some said he was worth millions, and others that he did not possess a farthing."

"And what is your opinion?"—"I ought not to influence you, because it is only my own personal impression."

"Well, and it is that:—"

"My opinion is, that all these old *podestats*, these ancient *condottieri*, for the Cavalcanti have commanded armies and governed provinces,—my opinion, I say, is, that they have buried their millions in corners, the secret of which they have only transmitted to their eldest sons, who have done the same from generation to generation, and the proof of this is seen in their yellow and dry appearance, like the florins of the republic, which, from being constantly gazed upon, have become reflected in them."

"Certainly," said Danglars, "and this is further supported by the fact of their not possessing an inch of land."—"Very little, at least: I know of none which Cavalcanti possess, excepting his palace in Lucca."

"Ah? he has a palace?" said Danglars, laughing: "come, that is something."—"Yes: and more than that, he lets it to the Minister of Finances while he lives in a simple house. Oh! as I told you before, I think the good man very close!"

"Come, you do not flatter him."—"I scarcely know him; I think I have seen him three times in my life: all I know relating to him is through Busoni and himself; he was telling me this morning that, tired of letting his property lie dormant in Italy, which is a dead nation, he wished to find a method, either in France or England, of multiplying his millions; but remember, that though I place great confidence in Busoni, I am not responsible for this."

"But he is betrothed to your daughter, I believe?"—"Certainly, M. de Morcerf and I have talked about this marriage, but Madame de Morcerf and Albert——"

"You do not mean to say that it would not be a good match?"

"Indeed, I imagine that Mademoiselle Danglars is as good as M. de Morcerf."—"Mademoiselle Danglars' fortune will be great, no doubt, especially if the telegraph should not make any more mistakes."

"Oh! I do not mean her fortune only; but tell me——"

"What!"

"Why did you not invite M. and Madame de Morcerf to your dinner?"

"I did so, but he excused himself on account of Madame de Morcerf being obliged to go to Dieppe for the benefit of sea air."—"Yes, yes," said Danglars, laughing, "it would do her a great deal of good."

"Why so?"—"Because it is the air she always breathed in her youth." Monte-Cristo took no notice of this ill-natured remark.

"But still, if Albert be not so rich as Mademoiselle Danglars," said the count, "you must allow that he has a fine name?"

"So he has; but I like mine as well."

"Certainly; your name is popular, and does honour to the title they intended to adorn you with; but you are too intelligent not to know, that according to a prejudice, too firmly rooted to be exterminated, a nobility which dates back five centuries is worth more than one that can only reckon twenty years."

"And for this very reason," said Danglars, with a smile, which he tried to make sardonic, "I prefer M. Andrea Cavalcanti to M. Albert de Morcerf."—"Still, I should not think the Morcerfs would yield to the Cavalcanti?"

"The Morcerfs!—Stay, my dear count," said Danglars; "you are a clever man, are you not?"—"I think so."

"And you understand heraldry?"—"A little."

"Well, look at my coat-of-arms, it is worth more than Morcerf's."

"Why so?"—"Because, though I am not a baron by birth, my real name is, at least, Danglars."

"Well, what then?"—"While his name is not Morcerf."

"How!—not Morcerf?"—"Not the least in the world."

"Go on!"—"I have been made a baron, so that I actually am one; he made himself a count, so that he is not one at all."—"Impossible!"

"Listen, my dear count; M. de Morcerf has been my friend, or rather my acquaintance, during the last thirty years. You know I have made the most of my arms, though I never forgot my origin."

"A proof of great humility or great pride," said Monte-Cristo.

"Well, when I was a clerk, Morcerf was a mere fisherman."

"And then he was called——"

"Fernand."—"Only Fernand?"

"Fernand Mondego."—"You are sure?"

"*Pardieu!* I have bought enough fish of him to know his name."

"Then, why did you think of giving your daughter to him?"

"Because Fernand and Danglars, being both *parvenus*, both having become noble, both rich, are about equal in worth, excepting that there have been certain things mentioned of him that were never said of me."

"What?"—"Oh, nothing!"

"Ah, yes! what you tell me recalls to mind something about the name of Fernand Mondego. I have heard that name in Greece."

"In conjunction with the affairs of Ali Pacha?"

"Exactly so."—"This is the mystery," said Danglars, "I acknowledge I would have given anything to find it out."

"It would be very easy if you much wished it?"—"How so?"

"Probably you have some correspondent in Greece?"

I should think so."—"At Janina?"

Everywhere."—"Well, write to your correspondent in Janina, and ask him what part was played by a Frenchman named Fernand Mondego in the catastrophe of Ali Tobelen."

"You are right," exclaimed Danglars, rising quickly, "I will write to-day."—"Do so."

"I will."—"And if you should hear of anything very scandalous—"

"I will communicate it to you."—"You will oblige me." Danglars rushed out of the room, and made but one leap into his *compté*.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROCUREUR DU ROI.

LET us leave the banker driving his horses at their fullest speed, and follow Madame Danglars in her morning excursion. We have said that, at half-past twelve o'clock, Madame Danglars had ordered her horses, and had left home in the carriage. She directed her course towards the Faubourg Saint Germain, went down the Rue de Seine, and stopped at the Passage du Pont-Neuf. She descended, and crossed the passage. She was very plainly dressed, as would be the case with a woman of taste walking in the morning. At the Rue Guénégaud she called a *fiacre*, and directed him to drive to the Rue de Harlay. As soon as she was seated in the coach, she drew from her pocket a very thick black veil, which she tied on to her straw bonnet. She then replaced the bonnet, and saw with pleasure, in a little pocket-mirror, that her white complexion and brilliant eyes

Danglars,—“it is a long time since I had the pleasure of speaking alone with you ; and I regret that we have only now met to enter upon a painful conversation.”—“Nevertheless, sir, you see I have answered your first appeal ; although certainly the conversation must be much more painful for me than for you.” Villefort smiled bitterly.

“It is true, then,” he said, rather uttering his thoughts aloud than addressing his companion,—“it is true, then, that all our actions leave their traces—some sad, others bright—on our paths ! It is, then, true that every step in our lives resembles the course of an insect on the sand—it leaves its track ! Alas ! to many the path is traced by tears.”

“Sir,” said Madame Danglars, “you can feel for my emotion, can you not ? Spare me, then, I beseech you. When I look at this room, whence so many guilty creatures have departed trembling and ashamed—when I look at that chair before which I now sit trembling and ashamed, oh ! it requires all my reason to convince me that I am not a very guilty woman and you a menacing judge.” Villefort dropped his head, and sighed. “And I,” he said, “I feel that my place is not in the judge’s seat, but on the prisoner’s stool.”—“You ?” said Madame Danglars.

“Yes, me.”—“I think, sir, you exaggerate your situation,” said Madame Danglars, whose beautiful eyes sparkled for a moment. “The paths of which you were just speaking have been traced by all young men of ardent imaginations. Besides the pleasure there is always remorse, from the indulgence of our passions ; and, after all, what have you men to fear from all this ; the world excuses, and notoriety ennobs you ?”

“Madame,” replied Villefort, “you know that I am no hypocrite, or, at least, that I never deceive without a reason. If my brow be severe, it is because many misfortunes have clouded it ; if my heart be petrified, it is that it might sustain the blows it has received. I was not so in my youth, I was not so on the night of the betrothal, when we were all seated round a table in the Rue du Cours at Marseilles. But since then everything has changed in and about me ; I am accustomed to brave difficulties, and, in the conflict, to crush those who, by their own free will, or by chance, voluntarily or involuntarily, interfere with me in my career. It is generally the case that what we most ardently desire is as ardently withheld from us by those who wish to obtain it, or from whom we attempt to snatch it. Thus, the greater number of a man’s errors come before him disguised under the specious form of necessity ; then, after error has been committed in a moment of excitement, of delirium, or of fear, we see that we might have avoided and escaped it. The means we might have used, which we in our blindness could not see, then seem simple and easy, and we say, ‘Why did I not do this, instead of that ?’ Women, on the contrary, are rarely tormented with remorse ; for the decision does not come from you ; your misfortunes are generally imposed upon you, and your faults the result of other’s crimes.”

“In any case, sir, you will allow,” replied Madame Danglars, “that, even if the fault were alone mine, I last night received a severe punishment for it.”—“Poor thing !” said Villefort, pressing her hand, “it was too severe for your strength, for you were twice overwhelmed, and yet—”

“Well ?”—“Well, I must tell you. Collect all your courage, for you have not yet heard all !”

“Ah !” exclaimed Madame Danglars, alarmed, “what is there more to hear ?”—“You only look back to the past ; and it is, indeed, bad enough. Well, picture to yourself a future more gloomy still—certainly frightful, perhaps sanguinary !” The baroness knew how calm Villefort naturally

was, and his present excitement frightened her so much that she opened her mouth to scream, but the sound died in her throat. "How has this terrible past been recalled?" cried Villefort; "how is it that it has escaped from the depths of the tomb and the recesses of our hearts, where it was buried, to visit us now, like a phantom, whitening our cheeks and flushing our brows with shame?"—"Alas!" said Hermine, "doubtless it is chance!"

"Chance!" replied Villefort; "no, no, madame, there is no such thing as chance!"—"Oh, yes; has not a fatal chance revealed all this? Was it not by chance the Count of Monte-Cristo bought this house? Was it not by chance he caused the earth to be dug? Is it not by chance that the unfortunate child was disinterred under the trees? That poor innocent offspring of mine, which I never even kissed, but for whom I wept many, many tears. Ah, my heart clung to the count when he mentioned the dear spoil found beneath the flowers."

"Well, no, madame!—this is the terrible news I have to tell you," said Villefort, in a hollow voice—"no, nothing was found beneath the flowers; there was no child disinterred—no! You must not weep, no, you must not groan, you must tremble!"

"What can you mean?" asked Madame Danglars, shuddering.

"I mean that M. de Monte-Cristo, digging underneath these trees, found neither skeleton nor chest, because neither of them was there!"

"Neither of them there!" repeated Madame Danglars, fixing upon him her eyes, which, by their fearful dilatation, indicated how much she was alarmed.

"Neither of them there!" she again said, as though striving to impress herself with the meaning of the words which escaped her.

"No!" said Villefort, burying his face in his hands, "no! a hundred times no!"—"Then you did not bury the poor child there, sir? Why did you deceive me? Where did you place it? tell me—where?"

Villefort followed the litter in her carriage. At Chalons I was put upon the Soane, thence I passed on to the Rhone, whence I descended, merely with the current, to Arles ; at Arles I was again placed on my litter, and continued my journey to Marseilles. My recovery lasted six months. I never heard you mentioned, and I did not dare inquire for you. When I returned to Paris, I learned that, widow of M. de Nargonne, you had married M. Danglars.

"What had been the subject of my thoughts ever since consciousness had returned to me? Always the same—always the child's corpse, which, every night in my dreams, rising from the earth, fixed itself above the grave with a menacing look and gesture. I inquired immediately on my return to Paris : the house had not been inhabited since we left it, but it had just been let for nine years. I found the tenant. I pretended that I disliked the idea of a house belonging to my wife's father and mother passing into the hands of strangers. I offered to pay them for yielding up the lease ; they demanded 6,000 francs. I would have given 10,000—I would have given 20,000. I had the money with me ; I made the tenant sign the cancelling deed, and when I had obtained what I so much wanted, I galloped to Auteuil. No one had entered the house since I had left it. It was five o'clock in the afternoon ; I ascended into the red room, and waited for night. There all the thoughts which had disturbed me during my year of constant agony occurred with double force. The Corsican, who had declared the *vendetta* against me, who had followed me from Nîmes to Paris, who had hid himself in the garden, who had struck me, had seen me dig the grave, had seen me inter the child ; he might become acquainted with your person—nay, he might even then have known it. Would he not one day make you pay for keeping this terrible secret? Would it not be a sweet revenge for him when he found I had not died from the blow of his dagger? It was therefore necessary, before everything else, and at all risks, that I should cause all traces of the past to disappear—that I should destroy every material vestige : too much reality would always remain in my recollection. It was for this I had annulled the lease—it was for this I had come—it was for this I was waiting. Night arrived ; I allowed it to become quite dark. I was without a light in that room ; when the wind shook all the doors, behind which I continually expected to see some concealed spy, I trembled. I seemed everywhere to hear your moans behind me in the bed, and I dared not turn round. My heart beat so violently that I feared my wound would open. At length, one by one, all the noises in the neighbouring country ceased. I understood that I had nothing to fear, that I should neither be seen nor heard, so I decided upon descending to the garden.

"Listen, Hermine ! I consider myself as brave as most men, but when I drew from my breast the little key of the staircase, which I had found in my coat—that little key we both used to cherish so much, which you wished to have fastened to a golden ring—when I opened the door, and saw the pale moon shedding a long stream of white light on the spiral staircase like a spectre, I leaned against the wall, and nearly shrieked. I seemed to be going mad. At last I mastered my agitation. I descended the staircase step by step ; the only thing I could not conquer was a strange trembling in my knees. I grasped the railings ; if I had relaxed my hold for a moment, I should have fallen. I reached the lower door. Outside this door a spade was placed against the wall ; I took it, and advanced towards the thicket. I had provided myself with a dark lantern. In the middle of the lawn I stopped to light it, then I continued my path.

It was the end of November ; all the freshness of the garden had disappeared, and the trees were nothing more than skeletons with their long bony arms, and the dead leaves sounded on the gravel under my feet. My terror overcame me to such a degree as I approached the thicket, that I took a pistol from my pocket and armed myself. I fancied continually that I saw the figure of the Corsican between the branches. I examined the thicket with my dark lantern ; it was empty. I cast my eyes all round ; I was indeed alone ; no noise disturbed the silence of the night but the owl, whose piercing cry seemed as if calling up the phantoms of the night. I tied my lantern to a forked branch I had remarked a year before at the precise spot where I stopped to dig the hole. The grass had grown very thickly there during the summer, and when autumn arrived no one had been there to mow it. Still one place less covered attracted my attention ; it evidently was there I had turned up the ground. I returned to work. The hour, then, for which I had been waiting during the last year had at length arrived. How I worked, how I hoped, how I sounded every piece of turf, thinking to find some resistance to my spade ! But no, I found nothing, though I had made a hole twice as large as the first. I thought I had been deceived—had mistaken the spot. I turned round, I looked at the trees, I tried to recall the details which had struck me at the time. A cold, sharp wind whistled through the leafless branches, and yet the drops fell from my forehead. I recollected that I was stabbed just as I was trampling the ground to fill up the hole ; while doing so, I had leaned against a false ebony-tree ; behind me was an artificial rock, intended to serve as a resting-place for persons walking in the garden ; in falling, my hand, relaxing its hold of the tree, felt the coldness of this stone. On my right I saw the tree, behind me the rock. I stood in the same attitude, and threw myself down. I rose, and again began digging and enlarging the hole, still I found nothing, nothing, the object was lost, I was alone.

"Ah, no, madame, that could not be. Dead bodies are not kept a year ; they are shown to a magistrate, and the evidence is taken. Now, nothing of the kind has happened."

"What then?" asked Hermine, trembling violently

"Something more terrible, more fatal, more alarming for us !—the child was, perhaps, alive, and the assassin may have saved it!"

Madame Danglars uttered a piercing cry, and, seizing Villefort's hands, exclaimed, "My child was alive!" said she; "you buried my child alive, sir! You were not certain my child was dead, and you buried it. Ah——"

Madame Danglars had risen, and stood before the procureur, whose hands she wrung in her feeble grasp. "I know not; I merely suppose so, as I might suppose anything else," replied Villefort, with a look so fixed, it indicated that his powerful mind was on the verge of despair and madness. "Ah, my child, my poor child!" cried the baroness, falling on her chair, and stifling her sobs in her handkerchief. Villefort, becoming somewhat reassured, perceived that to avert the maternal storm gathering over his head he must inspire Madame Danglars with the terror he felt. "You understand, then, that if that were so," said he, rising in his turn, and approaching the baroness, to speak to her in a lower tone, "we are lost. This child lives, and some one knows it lives—some one is in possession of our secret; and since Monte-Cristo speaks before us of a child disinterred, when that child could not be found, it is he who is in possession of our secret."

"Just God, avenging God!" murmured Madame Danglars.

Villefort's only answer was a species of groan.

"But the child—the child, sir?" repeated the agitated mother.

"How have I searched for him!" replied Villefort, wringing his hands; "how have I called him in my long sleepless nights! How have I longed for royal wealth to purchase a million of secrets from a million of men, and to find mine among them. At last, one day, when, for the hundredth time, I took up my spade, I asked myself again and again what the Corsican could have done with the child. A child encumbers a fugitive; perhaps, on perceiving it was still alive, he had thrown it into the river."

"Impossible!" cried Madame Danglars: "a man may murder another out of revenge, but he would not deliberately drown a child."

"Perhaps," continued Villefort, "he had put it in the foundling hospital?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried the baroness; "my child is there!"

"I ran to the hospital, and learned that the same night—the night of the 20th of September—a child had been brought there, wrapped in part of a fine linen napkin, purposely torn in half. This portion of the napkin was marked with half a baron's crown, and the letter H."

"Truly, truly," said Madame Danglars, "all my linen is marked thus: Monsieur de Nargonne was a baronet, and my name is Hermine. Thank God! my child was not then dead."

"No, it was not dead."—"And you can tell me so without fearing to make me die of joy, sir? Where is the child?" Villefort shrugged his shoulders. "Do I know?" said he; "and do you believe that if I knew I would relate to you all its trials and all its adventures as would a dramatist or a novel writer? Alas! no, I know not. A woman, about six months after, came to claim it with the other half of the napkin. This woman gave all the requisite particulars, and it was intrusted to her."

"But you should have inquired for the woman; you should have traced her."—"And what do you think I did? I feigned a criminal process, and employed all the most acute bloodhounds and skilful agents in search of her. They traced her to Châlons, and there they lost her."

"They lost her?"—"Yes, for ever." Madame Danglars had listened to this recital with a sigh, a tear, or a shriek, for every circumstance. "And this is all?" said she; "and you stopped there?"

"Oh, no!" said Villefort; "I never ceased to search and to inquire. However, the last two or three years I had allowed myself some respite. But now I will begin with more perseverance and fury than ever, since fear urges me, not my conscience."

"But," replied Madame Danglars, "the count of Monte-Cristo can know nothing, or he would not seek our society as he does."—"Oh, the wickedness of man is very great," said Villefort, "since it surpasses the goodness of God. Did you observe that man's eyes while he was speaking to us?"

"No."—"But have you ever watched him carefully?"

"Doubtless he is capricious, but that is all; one thing alone struck me; of all the exquisite things he placed before us, he touched nothing. I might have suspected he was poisoning us."

"And you see you would have been deceived."—"Yes, doubtless; but believe me, that man has other projects; for that reason I wished to see you, to speak to you, to warn you against every one, but especially against him. Tell me," cried Villefort, fixing his eyes more steadfastly on her than he had ever done before, "did you ever reveal to any one our connection?"—"Never, to any one."

"You understand me?" replied Villefort, affectionately; "when I say any one, pardon my urgency, to any one living I mean."

"Yes, yes, I understand very well," ejaculated the baroness; "never, I swear to you."

"Were you ever in the habit of writing in the evening what had transpired in the morning? Do you keep a journal?"

drove to the Champs Elysées, to the house of Monte-Cristo. The count received him with his habitual smile. It was a strange thing that no one ever appeared to advance a step in that man's favour. Those who would, as it were, force a passage to his heart, found an impassable barrier. Morcerf, who ran towards him with open arms, was chilled as he drew near, in spite of the friendly smile, and simply held out his hand. Monte-Cristo shook it coldly, according to his invariable practice. "Here I am, dear count."

"Welcome home again."—"I arrived an hour since."

"From Dieppe?"—"No, from Tréport."

"Indeed!"—"And I am directly come to see you."

"That is extremely kind of you," said Monte-Cristo, with a tone of perfect indifference.—"And what is the news?"

"You should not ask a stranger, a foreigner, for news."—"I know it, but in asking for news, I mean, have you done anything for me?"

"Had you commissioned me?" said Monte-Cristo, feigning uneasiness.—"Come, come!" said Albert, "do not assume so much indifference. It is said, sympathy travels rapidly; and when at Tréport, I felt the electric shock; you have either been working for me or thinking of me."

"Possibly," said Monte-Cristo, "I have indeed thought of you; but the magnetic wire I was guiding acted, indeed, without my knowledge."

"Indeed! pray tell me how it happened?"

"Willingly. M. Danglars dined with me."

"I know it; to avoid meeting him, my mother and I left town."

"But he met here M. Andrea Cavalcanti."

"Your Italian prince?"

"Not so fast; M. Andrea only calls himself count."

"Calls himself, do you say?"

"Yes, calls himself."—"Is he not a count?"

"What can I know of him? He calls himself so. I, of course, give him the same title, and every one else does the same."—"What a strange man you are! What next? You say M. Danglars dined here?"

"Yes, with Count Cavalcanti, the marquis his father, Madame Danglars, M. and Madame de Villefort, charming people, M. Debray, Maximilian Morrel, and M. de Château-Renaud."

"Did they speak of me?"—"Not a word."

"So much the worse."

"Why so? I thought you wished them to forget you?"

"If they did not speak of me, I am sure they thought about me, and I am in despair."—"How will that affect you, since Mademoiselle Danglars was not among the number here who thought of you? Truly, she might have thought of you at home."

"I have no fear of that; or, if she did, it was only in the same way in which I think of her."—"Touching sympathy! so you hate each other?" said the count.

"Listen!" said Morcerf—"if Mademoiselle Danglars were disposed to take pity on my supposed martyrdom on her account, and would dispense with all matrimonial formalities between our two families, I am ready to agree to the arrangement. In a word, Mademoiselle Danglars would make a charming mistress—but a wife, *diable!*"

"And this," said Monte-Cristo, "is your opinion of your intended spouse?"—"Yes; it is rather unkind, I acknowledge, but it is true. But as this dream cannot be realized, since Mademoiselle Danglars must

become my lawful wife, live perpetually with me, sing to me, compose verses and music within ten paces of me, and that for my whole life, it frightens me. One may forsake a mistress, but a wife, good heavens ! There she must always be ; and to marry Mademoiselle Danglars would be awful."—" You are difficult to please, viscount."

" Yes, for I often wish for what is impossible."—" What is that ?"

" To find such a wife as my father found." Monte-Cristo turned pale, and looked at Albert, while playing with some magnificent pistols.

" Your father was fortunate, then ?" said he.—" You know my opinion of my mother, count ; look at her, still beautiful, witty, better than ever. For any other son to have accompanied his mother four days at Tréport, it would have been a complaisance, an unprofitable toil ; while I return, more contented, more peaceful—shall I say more poetic ?—than if I had taken Queen Mab or Titania as my companion."

" That is an overwhelming perfection, and you would make every one vow to live a single life."—" Such are my reasons for not liking to marry Mademoiselle Danglars. Have you ever noticed how much a thing is heightened in value when we obtain possession of it ? The diamond which glittered in the window of Marlé or of Fossin shines with more splendour when it is our own ; but if we are compelled to acknowledge the superiority of another, and still must retain the one that is inferior, do you understand what must be the suffering ?"

" Worldling !" murmured the count.

" Thus I shall rejoice when Mademoiselle Eugénie perceives I am but a pitiful atom, with scarcely as many hundred thousand francs as she has millions." Monte-Cristo smiled. " One plan occurred to me," continued Albert ; " Franz likes all that is eccentric ; I tried to make him fall in love with Mademoiselle Danglars ; but in spite of four letters, written in the

Albert, laughing.—“Indeed, my dear sir,” said Monte-Cristo, “you are revoltingly foppish.”

“I foppish! how do you mean?”—“Yes; pray take a cigar, and cease to defend yourself, and to struggle to escape marrying Mademoiselle Danglars. Let things take their course; perhaps you may not have to retract.”

“Bah!” said Albert, staring.

“Doubtless, M. le Vicomte, you will not be taken by force; and seriously, do you wish to break off your engagement?”—“I would give a hundred thousand francs to be able to do so.”

“Then make yourself quite happy, M. Danglars would give double that sum to attain the same end.”—“Am I, indeed, so happy?” said Albert, who still could not prevent an almost imperceptible cloud passing across his brow. “But, my dear count, has M. Danglars any reason?”

“Ah! there is your proud and selfish nature. You would expose the self-love of another with a hatchet, but you shrink if your own is attacked with a needle.”—“But yet, M. Danglars appeared—”

“Delighted with you, was he not? Well, he is a man of bad taste, and is still more enchanted with another. I know not whom: study and judge for yourself.”—“Thank you, I understand. But my mother—no, not my mother, I mistake—my father intends giving a ball.”

“A ball at this season?”—“Summer balls are fashionable.”

“If they were not, the countess has only to wish it, and they would become so.”—“You are right; you know they are unmixed balls: those who remain in Paris in July must be true Parisians. Will you take charge of our invitation to Messieurs Cavalcanti?”

“When will it take place?”—“On Saturday.”

“M. Cavalcanti’s father will be gone.”

“But the son will be here; will you invite young M. Cavalcanti?”

“I do not know him, viscount.”

“You do not know him?”—“No, I have never seen him until a few days since, and am not responsible for him.”

“But you receive him at your house?”—“That is another thing; he was recommended to me by a good abbé, who may be deceived. Give him a direct invitation, but do not ask me to present him; if he were afterwards to marry Mademoiselle Danglars, you would accuse me of intrigue, and would be challenging me; besides, I may not be there myself.”

“Where?”—“At your ball.”—“Why should you not be there?”

“Because you have not yet invited me.”

“But I come expressly for that purpose.”

“You are very kind, but I may be prevented.”—“If I tell you one thing, you will be so amiable as to set aside all impediments.”

“Tell me what it is.”—“My mother begs you to come.”

“The countess de Morcerf?” said Monte-Cristo, starting.—“Ah, count,” said Albert, “I assure you Madame de Morcerf speaks freely to me, and if you have not felt those sympathetic fibres of which I spoke just now thrill within you, you must be entirely devoid of them, for during the last four days we have spoken of no one else.”

“You have talked of me?”

“Yes, that is your privilege, being a living problem!”—“Then I am also a problem to your mother! I should have thought her too reasonable to be led by imagination.”

“A problem, my dear count, for every one—for my mother as well as

others ; much studied, but not solved, you still remain an enigma, do not fear. My mother is only astonished that you remain so long unresolved. I believe, while the Countess G— takes you for Lord Ruthven, my mother imagines you to be Cagliostro or Count St. Germain. The first opportunity you have, confirm her in her opinion ; it will be easy for you, as you have the philosophy of the one and the wit of the other.”——“I thank you for the warning,” said the count ; “I shall endeavour to be prepared for all suppositions.”

“You will, then, come on Saturday?”

“Yes, since Madame de Morcerf invites me.”

“You are very kind.”——“Will M. Danglars be there?”——“He has already been invited by my father. We shall try to persuade the great d’Aguesseau, M. de Villefort, to come, but have not much hope of seeing him.”——“Never despair,” says the proverb.”

“Do you dance, count?”——“I dance?”

“Yes, you ; it would not be astonishing.”

“That is very well before one is above forty. No, I do not dance, but I like to see others. Does Madame de Morcerf dance?”——“Never ; you can talk to her, she so delights in your conversation.”

“Indeed !”——“Yes, truly ; and I assure you, you are the only man of whom I have heard her speak with interest.” Albert rose and took his hat ; the count conducted him to the door. “I have one thing to reproach myself with,” said he, stopping Albert on the steps. “What is it?”——“I have spoken to you indiscreetly about Danglars.”

“On the contrary, speak to me always in the same strain about him.”

“That is enough. *À propos*, when do you expect M. d’Epinay?”

“Five or six days hence at the latest.”

“And when is he to be married?”

"The person called M. le comte de Monte-Cristo is an intimate acquaintance of Lord Wilmore, a rich foreigner, who is sometimes seen in Paris, and who is there at this moment ; he is also known to the Abbé Busoni, a Sicilian priest, of high repute in the East, where he has done much good."

M. de Villefort replied by ordering the strictest inquiries to be made respecting these two persons ; his orders were executed, and the following evening he received these details :—

"The abbé, who was in Paris for a month, inhabited a small house behind St. Sulpice, composed of one single story over the ground-floor, two rooms were on each floor, and he was the only tenant. The two lower rooms consisted of a dining-room, with a table, chairs, and side-board of walnut-tree, and a wainscoted parlour, without ornaments, carpet, or time-piece. It was evident the abbé limited himself to objects of strict necessity. It was true the abbé preferred the sitting-room upstairs, which, being furnished with theological books and parchments, in which he delighted to bury himself during whole months, was more a library than a parlour. His valet looked at the visitors through a sort of wicket, and if their countenance was unknown to him or displeased him, he replied that M. l'Abbé was not in Paris, an answer which satisfied most persons, because the abbé was known to be a great traveller. Besides, whether at home or not, whether in Paris or Cairo, the abbé always left something to give away, which the valet distributed through this wicket in his master's name. The other room near the library was a bedroom. A bed without curtains, four arm-chairs, and a couch, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, composed, with a *prie-Dieu*, all its furniture. Lord Wilmore resided in Rue Fontaine-Saint-George. He was one of those English tourists who consume a large fortune in travelling. He hired the apartment in which he lived furnished, passed only a few hours in the day there, and rarely slept there. One of his peculiarities was never to speak a word of French, which he however wrote with great purity."

The day after these important particulars had been furnished to M. le Procureur, a man alighted from a carriage at the corner of the Rue Férou, and rapping at an olive-green door, asked if the Abbé Busoni were within. "No, he went out early this morning," replied the valet.

"I might not always be contented with that answer," replied the visitor, "for I come from one to whom every one must be at home. But have the kindness to give the Abbé Busoni——"

"I told you he was not at home !" repeated the valet. "Then, on his return give him that card and this sealed paper. Will he be at home at eight o'clock this evening?"

"Doubtless, unless he is at work, which is the same as if he were out."

"I will come again at that time," replied the visitor, who then retired.

At the appointed hour the same man returned in the same carriage, which, instead of stopping this time at the end of the Rue Férou, drove up to the green door. He knocked, and it was opened immediately to admit him. From the signs of respect the valet paid him, he saw his note had produced a good effect. "Is the abbé at home?" asked he.

"Yes ; he is at work in his library, but he expects you, sir," replied the valet. The stranger ascended a rough staircase, and before a table, whose surface was illumined by a lamp, whose light was concentrated by a large shade, whilst the rest of the apartment was in partial darkness, he perceived the abbé in a monk's dress, with a cowl on his head such as was

already been invited by my father. We shall try to get d'Aguesscan, M. de Villefort, to come, but have not much chance of it."—"Never despair," says the proverb."

"Do you dance, count?"—"I dance?"

"Yes, you; it would not be astonishing."

"That is very well before one is above forty. No, I do not like to see others. Does Madame de Morcerf dance?"—"I can talk to her, she so delights in your conversation."

"Indeed!"—"Yes, truly; and I assure you, you are to whom I have heard her speak with interest." Albert rose; the count conducted him to the door. "I have one thing myself with," said he, stopping Albert on the steps. "What have you spoken to you indiscreetly about Danglars?"

"On the contrary, speak to me always in the same strain:

"That is enough. *Apropos*, when do you expect M. d'Esp

"Five or six days hence at the latest."

"And when is he to be married?"

"Immediately on the arrival of M. and Madame de St.

"Bring him to see me. Although you say I do not like you I shall be happy to see him."—"I will obey your or

"Good-bye."—"Until Saturday, when I may expect

"Yes, I promised you." The count watched Albert, to him. When he had mounted his phaeton, Monte-Cristo seeing Bertuccio, "What news?" said he. "She went to the steward."

"Did she stay long there?"—"An hour and a half."

"Did she return home?"—"Directly."

"What did Bertuccio," said the count, "I now request you to state I spoke to you of in Normandy, and that you were in perfect harmony with the countess that evening."

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nual visitor ; " I have heard he has

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used by learned men of the middle age. "Have I the honour of addressing the Abbé Busoni?" asked the visitor.

"Yes, sir," replied the abbé; "and you are the person whom M. de Boville, formerly an inspector of prisons, sends to me from the prefect of police?" — "Exactly, sir."

"One of the agents appointed to secure the safety of Paris?"

"Yes, sir," replied the stranger, with a slight hesitation, and blushing.

The abbé replaced the large spectacles, which covered, not only his eyes, but his temples, and sitting down, motioned to his visitor to do the same. "I am at your service, sir," said the abbé, with a marked Italian accent.

"The mission with which I am charged, sir," replied the visitor, speaking with hesitation, "is a confidential one on the part of him who fulfils it, and him by whom he is employed." The abbé bowed. "Your probity," replied the stranger, "is so well known to the prefect, that he wishes, as a magistrate, to ascertain from you some particulars connected with the public safety; to ascertain which I am deputed to see you. It is hoped that no ties of friendship or humane consideration will induce you to conceal the truth."

"Provided, sir, the particulars you wish for do not interfere with my scruples or my conscience. I am a priest, sir, and the secrets of confession, for instance, must remain between me and God, and not between me and human justice." — "Do not alarm yourself, M. l'Abbé, we will duly respect your conscience."

At this moment the abbé pressed down his side of the shade, which raised it on the other, and threw a bright light on the face of the stranger, while his own remained obscured. "Excuse me, abbé," said the envoy of the prefect of the police, "but the light tries my eyes very much."

"From one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand livres per annum."—"This is reasonable," said the visitor; "I have heard he had three or four millions."

"Two hundred thousand per annum would make four millions of capital."—"But I was told he had four millions per annum?"

"That is not probable."

"Do you know this island of Monte-Cristo?"—"Certainly; every one who has returned from Palermo, from Naples, or from Rome to France, by sea, must know it, since he has passed close to it, and must have seen it."

"I am told it is a delightful place?"—"It is a rock."

"And why has the count bought a rock?"—"For the sake of being a count. In Italy one must have a county to be a count."

"You have, doubtless, heard the adventures of M. Zaccone's youth?"

"The father's?"—"No, the son's."

"I know nothing certain; at that period of his life, I lost sight of my young comrade."—"Did he go to war?"

"I think he entered the service."—"In what force?"

"In the navy."—"Are you not his confessor?"

"No, sir; I believe he is a Lutheran."—"A Lutheran?"

"I say, I believe such is the case, I do not affirm it; besides, liberty of conscience is established in France."—"Doubtless, and we are not now inquiring into his creed, but his actions; in the name of the prefect of police, I demand, what do you know of him?"

"He passes for a very charitable man. Our holy father, the pope, has made him a knight of Jesus Christ for the services he rendered to the Christians in the East; he has five or six rings as testimonials from Eastern monarchs of his services."—"Does he wear them?"

"No, but he is proud of them; he is better pleased with rewards given to the benefactors of man than to his destroyers."

"He is a Quaker then?"

"Exactly, he is a Quaker, with the exception of the peculiar dress."

"Has he any friends?"

"Yes, every one who knows him is his friend."

"But has he any enemies?"—"One only."

"What is his name?"—"Lord Wilmore."

"Where is he?"—"He is in Paris just now."

"Can he give me any particulars?"

"Important ones; he was in India with Zaccone."

"Do you know his abode?"—"It is somewhere in la Chaussée d'Antin; but I know neither the street nor the number."

"Are you at variance with the Englishman?"—"I love Zaccone, and he hates him; we are consequently not friends."

"Do you think the count of Monte-Cristo had ever been in France before he made this visit to Paris?"—"To that question I can answer positively; no, sir, he had never been, because he applied to me six months since for the particulars he required; and as I knew not when I might again come to Paris, I recommend M. Cavalcanti to him."

"Andrea?"—"No, Bartolomeo, his father."

"Now, sir, I have but one question more to ask, and I charge you, in the name of honour, of humanity, and of religion, to answer me candidly."

"What is it, sir?"

"Do you know with what design M. de Monte-Cristo purchased a house at Auteuil?"—"Certainly, for he told me."

nothing really satisfactory, and, for the first time since the dinner-party at Auteuil, he slept soundly.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE BALL.

It was in the warmest days of July, when, in due course of time, the Saturday arrived upon which the ball of M. de Morcerf was to take place. It was ten o'clock at night ; the large trees in the garden of the count's hotel threw up their branches towards the azure canopy of heaven, studded with golden stars, but where the last mists of a storm, which had threatened all day, yet glided. From the apartments on the ground-floor might be heard the sound of music, with the whirl of the waltz and galop, while brilliant streams of light shone through the openings of the Venetian blinds. At this moment the garden was only occupied by about ten servants, who had just received orders from their mistress to prepare the supper, the serenity of the weather continuing to increase. Until now, it had been undecided whether the supper should take place in the dining-room, or under a long tent erected on the lawn ; but the beautiful blue sky, covered with stars, had determined the case in favour of the lawn. The gardens were illuminated with coloured lanterns, according to the Italian custom, and, as usual in those countries where the luxuries of the table are well understood, the supper-table was loaded with wax-lights and flowers.

At the time the Countess de Morcerf returned to the rooms, after giving her orders, many guests were arriving, more attracted by the charming hospitality of the countess than by the distinguished position of the count ; for, owing to the good taste of Mercédès, one was sure of finding some arrangements at her fête worthy of relating or even causing to relate.

"and that you are the seventeenth person that has asked me the same question. The count is in fashion ; I congratulate him upon it."

"And have you replied to every one as you have to me?"

"Ah ! to be sure, I have not answered you ; be satisfied, we shall have this ' lion ; ' we are among the privileged ones."

"Were you at the opera yesterday?"—"No."

"He was there."—"Ah, indeed ! And did the eccentric person commit any new originality?"

"Can he be seen without doing so ? Elssler was dancing in *le Diable Boiteux* ; the Greek princess was in ecstasies. After the cachucha he placed a magnificent ring on the stem of a bouquet, and threw it to the charming *danseuse*, who, in the third act, to do honour to the gift, re-appeared with it on her finger. And the Greek princess, will she be here?"—"No, you will be deprived of that pleasure ; her position in the count's establishment is not sufficiently understood."—"Wait ; leave me here, and go and speak to Madame de Villefort, who is longing to engage your attention."

Albert bowed to Madame Danglars, and advanced towards Madame de Villefort, whose lips opened as he approached. "I wager anything," said Albert, interrupting her, "that I know what you were about to say."—"Well, what is it?"

"If I guess rightly, will you confess it."—"Yes."

"On your honour?"—"On my honour."

"You were going to ask me if the count of Monte-Cristo were arrived, or expected."—"Not at all. It is not of him that I am now thinking. I was going to ask you if you had received any news of M. Franz?"

"Yes, yesterday."—"What did he tell you?"

"That he was leaving at the same time as his letter."

"Well, now then, the count?"—"The count will come, be satisfied."

"You know that he has another name besides Monte-Cristo?"

"No, I did not know it."—"Monte-Cristo is the name of an island, and he has a family name."—"I never heard it."

"Well, then, I am better informed than you ; his name is Zaccane."

"It is possible."—"He is a Maltese."—"That is also possible."

"The son of a shipowner."

"Really, you should relate all this aloud, you would have the greatest success."—"He served in India, discovered a mine in Thessaly, and comes to Paris to form an establishment of mineral waters at Auteuil."

"Well ! I'm sure," said Morcerf ; "this is indeed news ! Am I allowed to repeat it?"—"Yes, but cautiously ; tell one thing at a time, and do not say I told you."

"Why so?"—"Because it is a secret just discovered."

"By whom?"—"The police."

"Then the news originated—"

"At the prefect's last night. Paris, you can understand, is astonished at the sight of such unusual splendour, and the police have made inquiries."

"Good ! nothing more is wanting than to arrest the count as a vagabond, on the pretext of his being too rich."

"Indeed, this would doubtless have happened if his credentials had not been so favourable."—"Poor count ! And is he aware of the danger he has been in?"

"I think not."—"Then it will be but charitable to inform him. When he arrives, I will not fail to do so."

Just then, a handsome young man, with bright eyes, black hair, and

glossy mustache, respectfully bowed to Madame de Villefort. Albert extended him his hand. "Madame," said Albert, "allow me to present to you M. Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis, one of our best, and, above all, of our bravest officers."—"I have already had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman at Auteuil, at the house of the Count of Monte-Cristo," replied Madame de Villefort, turning away with marked coldness of manner. This answer, and, above all, the tone in which it was uttered, chilled the heart of poor Morrel. But a recompense was in store for him: turning round, he saw near the door a beautiful fair face, whose large blue eyes were, without any marked expression, fixed upon him, while the bouquet of *myosotis* was gently raised to her lips.

The salutation was so well understood that Morrel, with the same expression in his eyes, placed his handkerchief to his mouth; and these two living statues, whose hearts beat so violently under their marble aspect, separated from each other by the whole length of the room, forgot themselves for a moment, or rather forgot the world in their mutual contemplation. They might have remained much longer lost in one another, without any one noticing their abstraction. The Count of Monte-Cristo had just entered. We have already said that there was something in the count which attracted universal attention wherever he appeared. It was not the coat, unexceptionable in its cut, though simple and unornamented; it was not the plain white waistcoat; it was not the trousers, that displayed the foot so perfectly formed—it was none of these things that attracted the attention: it was his pale complexion, his waving black hair; it was the expression so calm and serene; it was the eye, so dark and melancholy; it was the mouth, chiselled with such marvellous delicacy, which so easily expressed such high disdain—these were what fixed all eyes upon him. Many men might have been handsomer, but certainly there could be none whose appearance was more significant if the expression may be used

assure you the vertebra made a great noise in the learned world, and the gentleman, who was only a knight of the Legion of Honour, was made an officer."

"Come," said Monte-Cristo, "this cross seems to me to be wisely awarded. I suppose, had he found another additional vertebra, they would have made him a commander."—"Very likely," said Albert.

"And who can that person be who has taken it into his head to wrap himself up in a blue coat embroidered with green?"

"Oh, that coat is not his own idea; it is the Republic's, which deputed David to draw a uniform for the Academicians."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo; "so this gentleman is an Academician?"

"Within the last week he has been made one of the learned assembly."

"And what is his especial talent?"

"His talent? I believe he thrusts pins through the heads of rabbits, that he makes fowls eat madder, and that he keeps back the spinal marrow of dogs with whalebone."—"And he is made a member of the Academy of Sciences for this?"—"No; of the French Academy."

"But what has the French Academy to do with all this?"

"I was going to tell you. It seems——"

"That his experiments have very considerably advanced the cause of science, doubtless?"—"No; that his style of writing is very good."

"This must be very flattering to the feelings of the rabbits into whose heads he has thrust pins, to the fowls whose bones he has dyed red, and to the dogs whose spinal marrow he has repelled?" Albert laughed.

"And the other one?" demanded the count.

"That one?"—"Yes, the third."

"Ah! in the dark blue coat?"—"Yes."

"He is a colleague of the count, and one of the warmest opponents to the Chamber of Peers having a uniform. He was very successful upon that question. He stood badly with the Liberal papers, but his noble opposition to the wishes of the court has recommended him to them. They talk of making him an ambassador."

"And what are his claims to the peerage?"

"He has composed two or three comic operas, written four or five articles in the *Silc*, and voted five or six years for the minister."

"Bravo, viscount!" said Monte-Cristo, smiling; "you are a delightful cicerone. And now you will do me a favour, will you not?"

"What is it?"—"Do not introduce me to any of these gentlemen; and should they wish it, you will warn me." Just then the count felt his arm pressed. He turned round; it was Danglars.

"Ah! is it you, baron?" said he.

"Why do you call me baron?" said Danglars; "you know that I care nothing for my title. I am not like you, viscount; you like your title, do you not?"—"Certainly," replied Albert, "seeing that without my title I should be nothing; while you, sacrificing the baron, would still remain the millionaire."

"Which seems to me the finest title under the royalty of July," replied Danglars.—"Unfortunately," said Monte-Cristo, "one's title to a millionaire does not last for life, li'e that of baron, peer of France, or academician; for example, the millionaires Frank and Poulmann, of Frankfort, who have just become bankrupts."

"Indeed!" said Danglars, becoming pale.

"Yes; I received the news this evening by a courier. I had about a million in their hands; but, warned in time, I withdrew it a month ago."

"Ah," exclaimed Danglars, "they have drawn on me for 200,000 francs!"

"Well, you can guard against it; their signature is worth five per cent."

"Yes, but it is too late," said Danglars; "I have honoured their bills."

"Good," said Monte-Cristo, "here are 200,000 francs gone after——"

"Hush! do not mention these things," said Danglars; then, approaching Monte-Cristo, he added, "especially before young M. Cavalcanti;" after which he smiled, and turned towards the young man in question. Albert had left the count to speak to his mother, Danglars to converse with young Cavalcanti; Monte-Cristo was for an instant alone. Meanwhile the heat became excessive. The footmen were hastening through the rooms with waiters loaded with ices. Monte-Cristo wiped the perspiration from his forehead, but drew back when the waiter was presented to him; he took no refreshment. Madame de Morcerf lost not sight of Monte-Cristo; she saw that he took nothing, and even noticed the movement with which he withdrew from it.

"Albert," she asked, "did you notice that?"——"What, mother?"

"That the count will never accept an invitation to dine with us."

"Yes; but then he breakfasted with me—indeed, he made his first appearance in the world on that occasion."

"But your house is not M. de Morcerf's," murmured Mercédès; "and since he has been here I have watched him."

"Well?"——"Well, he has taken nothing yet."

"The count is very temperate." Mercédès smiled sadly. "Approach him," said she, "and the next waiter that passes, insist upon his taking something."——"But why, mother?"

"Oblige me, Albert," said Mercédès. Albert kissed his mother's hand, and drew near to the count. Another salver passed, loaded as the preceding ones: she saw Albert attempt to persuade the count, but he obstinately refused. Albert rejoined his mother: she was very pale.

"Then," said Mercédès, "I will lead the way." Turning towards Monte-Cristo, she added, "Count, will you oblige me with your arm?" The count almost staggered at these simple words; then he fixed his eyes on Mercédès. It was but the glance of a moment, but it seemed to the countess to have lasted for a century, so much was expressed in that one look. He offered his arm to the countess; she leaned upon it, or rather just touched it with her little hand, and they together descended the steps, lined with rhododendrons and camelias. Behind them, by another outlet, a group of about twenty persons rushed into the garden with loud exclamations of delight.

CHAPTER LXXI.

BREAD AND SALT.

MADAME DE MORCERF entered an archway of trees with her companion. It was a grove of lindens, conducting to a conservatory.

"It was too warm in the room, was it not, count?" she asked.

"Yes, madame; and it was an excellent idea of yours to open the doors and the blinds." As he ceased speaking, the count felt the hand of Mercédès tremble. "But you," he said, "with that light dress, and without anything to cover you but that gauze scarf, perhaps you feel cold?"

"Do you know where I am leading you?" said the countess, without replying to the question of Monte-Cristo.

"No, madame," replied Monte-Cristo; "but you see I make no resistance."—"We are going to the green-house that you see at the end of this grove."

The count looked at Mercédès as if to interrogate her, but she continued walking in silence; on his side, Monte-Cristo also said nothing. They reached the building, ornamented with magnificent fruits, which ripen even in July in the artificial temperature which takes the place of the sun, so frequently absent in our climate. The countess left the arm of Monte-Cristo, and gathered a bunch of Muscatel grapes. "See, count," she said, with a smile, so sad in its expression that one could almost see the tears on her eyelids—"see, our French grapes are not to be compared, I know, with yours of Sicily and Cyprus, but you will make allowance for our northern sun." The count bowed, but stepped back. "Do you refuse?" said Mercédès, in a tremulous voice. "Pray excuse me, madam," replied Monte-Cristo, "but I never eat Muscatel grapes."

Mercédès let them fall, and sighed. A magnificent peach was hanging against an adjoining wall, ripened by the same artificial heat. Mercédès drew near, and plucked the fruit. "Take this peach, then," she said. The count again refused. "What, again!" she exclaimed, in so plaintive an accent that it seemed but to stifle a sob; "really, you pain me." A long silence succeeded this scene; the peach, like the grapes, was rolling on the ground. "Count," added Mercédès, with a supplicating glance, "there is a beautiful Arabian custom, which makes eternal friends of those who have together eaten bread and salt beneath the same roof."—"I know it, madame," replied the count; "but we are in France, and not in Arabia; and in France eternal friendships are as rare as the custom of dividing bread and salt with one another."—"But," said the countess, breathlessly, with her eyes fixed on Monte-Cristo, whose arm she convulsively pressed with both hands, "we are friends, are we not?" The count became pale as death, the blood rushed to his heart, and then again rising, dyed his cheeks with crimson; his eyes swam like those of a man

suddenly dazzled. "Certainly, we are friends," he replied; "why should we not be such?" The answer was so little like the one *Mercédès* desired, that she turned away to give vent to a sigh, which sounded more like a groan. "Thank you," she said. And they recommenced walking. They went the whole length of the garden without uttering a word. "Sir," suddenly exclaimed the countess, after their walk had continued ten minutes in silence, "is it true that you have seen so much, travelled so far, and suffered so deeply?"—"I have suffered deeply, madame," answered *Monte-Cristo*.

"But now you are happy?"

"Doubtless," replied the count, "since no one hears me complain."

"And your present happiness, has it softened your heart?"

"My present happiness equals my past misery," said the count.

"Are you not married?" asked the countess. "I married!" exclaimed *Monte-Cristo*, shuddering; "who could have told you so?"

"No one told me you were; but you have frequently been seen at the Opera with a young and lovely person."—"She is a slave whom I bought at Constantinople, madame, the daughter of a prince. I have adopted her as my daughter, having no one else to love in the world."

"You live alone, then?"—"I do."

"You have no sister—no son—no father?"—"I have no one."

"How can you exist thus, without any one to attach you to life?"

"It is not my fault, madame. At Malta, I loved a young girl, was on the point of marrying her, when war came and carried me away. I thought she loved me well enough to wait for me, and even to remain faithful to my grave. When I returned she was married. This is the history of most men who have passed twenty years of age. Perhaps my heart was weaker than those of the generality, and I suffered more than they would

after he left Marseilles. Madame de Villefort, who was in very good spirits, would neither believe nor think of the misfortune ; but Mademoiselle Valentine, at the first words, guessed the whole truth, notwithstanding all the precautions of her father ; the blow struck her like a thunderbolt, and she fell senseless."

"And how was M. de Saint-Méran related to Mademoiselle de Villefort?" said the count. "He was her grandfather on the mother's side. He was coming here to hasten her marriage with Franz."

"Ah, indeed!"—"Franz is delayed, then. Why, is not M. de Saint-Méran also grandfather to Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Albert! Albert!" said Madame de Morcerf, in a tone of mild reproof, "what are you saying? Ah! count, he esteems you so highly, tell him that he has spoken amiss." And she took two or three steps forward. Monte-Cristo watched her with an air so thoughtful, and so full of affectionate admiration, that she returned, taking his hand ; at the same time she grasped that of her son, and joined them together.

"We are friends ; are we not?" she asked.

"Oh, madame, I do not presume to call myself your friend, but at all times I am your most respectful servant." The countess left with an indescribable pang in her heart, and before she had taken ten steps the count saw her raise her handkerchief to her eyes. "Do not my mother and you agree?" asked Albert, astonished.

"On the contrary," replied the count, "did you not hear her declare that we were friends?" They re-entered the drawing-room, which Valentine and Madame de Villefort had just quitted. Monte-Cristo departed almost at the same time.

CHAPTER LXXII.

MADAME DE SAINT-MERAN.

A GLOOMY scene had indeed just passed at the house of De Villefort. After the ladies had departed for the ball, whither all the entreaties of Madame de Villefort had failed in persuading him to accompany them, the procureur du roi had, as usual, shut himself up in his study, with a heap of papers calculated to alarm any one else, but which generally scarcely satisfied his inordinate desires. But this time the papers were a mere matter of form. Villefort had secluded himself, not to study, but to reflect ; and, with the door locked, and orders given that he should not be disturbed, excepting for important business, he sat down in his arm-chair, and began to ponder over those events, the remembrance of which had, during the last eight days, filled his mind with so many gloomy thoughts and bitter recollections. Then, instead of plunging into the mass of papers piled before him, he opened the drawer of his desk, touched a spring, and drew out a parcel of notes, precious documents, amongst which he had carefully arranged, in characters only known to himself, the names of all those who, either in his political career, in money matters, at the bar, or in his mysterious love affairs, had become his enemies. Their number was formidable, now that he had begun to fear, and yet these names, powerful though they were, had often caused him to smile with the same kind of satisfaction experienced by a traveller who, from the summit of a mountain, beholds at his feet the craggy eminences, the almost impassable paths, and the fearful chasms, through which he has so perilously climbed. When he had run over all these names in his memory, again read

and studied them, commenting meanwhile upon his lists, he shook his head.

"No!" he murmured, "none of my enemies would have waited so patiently and laboriously for so long a space of time, that they might now come and crush me with this secret. Sometimes, as Hamlet says—

"Deeds will rise,
Tho' all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes;"

but, like a phosphoric light, they rise but to mislead. The story has been told by the Corsican to some priest, who, in his turn, has also repeated it. M. de Monte-Cristo may have heard it, and to enlighten himself—but why should he wish to enlighten himself upon the subject?" asked Villefort, after a moment's reflection, "what interest can this M. de Monte-Cristo, M. Zaccane, son of a ship-owner of Malta, discoverer of a mine in Thessaly, now visiting Paris for the first time—what interest, I say, can he take in discovering a gloomy, mysterious, and useless fact like this? However, amidst all the incoherent details given to me by the Abbé Busoni and by Lord Wilmore, by that friend and that enemy, one thing appears certain and clear in my opinion: that in no period, in no case, in no circumstance, could there have been any contact between him and me."

But Villefort uttered words which even he himself did not believe. He dreaded not the revelation so much, for he could reply to, or deny its truth; he cared little for that Mene, Tekel, Phares, which appeared suddenly in letters of blood upon the wall; but what he was really anxious for was to discover whose hand had traced them. While he was endeavouring to calm his fears, and instead of dwelling upon the political future that had so often been the subject of his ambitious dreams, he was imagining a future limited to the enjoyments of home, fearing to awaken the

unnatural ; still I hesitated to wake him, when I fancied his face became red, and that the veins in his temples throbbed more violently than usual. However, as it became dark, and I could no longer see, I fell asleep ; I was soon awoke by a piercing shriek, as from a person suffering in his dreams, and he suddenly threw his head back. I stopped the postilion, I called M. de Saint-Méran, I applied my smelling-salts ; but all was over, and I arrived at Aix by the side of a corpse." Villefort stood with his mouth half open, quite stupefied.

"Of course you sent for a doctor?"

"Immediately ; but, as I have told you, it was too late."—"Yes ; but then he could tell of what complaint the poor marquis had died."

"Oh, yes, sir, he told me ; it appears to have been an apoplectic stroke."

"And what did you do then?"

"M. de Saint-Méran had always expressed a desire, in case of his death happening during his absence from Paris, that his body might be brought to the family vault. I had him put into a leaden coffin, and I am preceding him by a few days."—"Oh ! my poor mother !" said De Villefort, "to have such duties to perform at your age after such a blow !"

"God has supported me through all ! And then, my dear marquis, he would certainly have done everything for me that I performed for him. It is true that since I left him, I seem to have lost my senses. I cannot cry ; at my age they say that we have no more tears ; still I think that when one is in trouble we should have the power of weeping. Where is Valentine, sir ? It is on her account I am here ; I wish to see Valentine." Villefort thought it would be terrible to reply that Valentine was at a ball ; so he only said that she had gone out with her step-mother, and that she should be fetched. "This instant, sir—this instant, I beseech you !" said the old lady. Villefort placed the arm of Madame de Saint-Méran within his own, and conducted her to his apartment. "Rest yourself, mother," he said.

The marchioness raised her head at this word, and beholding the man who so forcibly reminded her of her deeply-regretted child, who still lived for her in Valentine, she felt touched at the name of mother ; and bursting into tears, she fell on her knees before an arm-chair, where she buried her venerable head. Villefort left her to the care of the women, while old Barrois ran, half-scared, to his master ; for nothing frightens old men so much as when death relaxes its vigilance over them for a moment in order to strike some other old man. Then, while Madame de Saint-Méran, still on her knees, remained praying fervently, Villefort sent for a hackney-coach, and went himself to fetch his wife and daughter from Madame de Morceri's. He was so pale when he appeared at the door of the ball-room, that Valentine ran to him, saying—

"Oh, father ! some misfortune has happened !"

"Your grandmamma has just arrived, Valentine," said M. de Villefort.

"And grandpapa !" inquired the young girl, trembling with apprehension. M. de Villefort only replied by offering his arm to his daughter. It was just in time, for Valentine's head swam, and she staggered ; Madame de Villefort instantly hastened to her assistance, and aided her husband in dragging her to the carriage, saying—"What a singular event ! Who could have thought it ? Ah, yes, it is indeed strange !" And the wretched family departed, leaving a cloud of sadness hanging over the rest of the evening. At the foot of the stairs, Valentine found Barrois awaiting her.

"M. Noirtier wishes to see you to-night," he said, in an undertone.

"Tell him I will come when I leave my dear grandmamma," she replied, feeling, with true delicacy, that the person to whom she could be of the most service just then was Madame de Saint-Méran. Valentine found her grandmother in bed; silent caresses, heartwringing sobs, broken sighs, burning tears, were all that passed in this sad interview; while Madame de Villefort, leaning on her husband's arm, maintained all outward forms of respect, at least towards the poor widow. She soon whispered to her husband, "I think it would be better for me to retire, with your permission, for the sight of me appears still to afflict your mother-in-law." Madame de Saint-Méran heard her. "Yes, yes," she said, softly, to Valentine, "let her leave; but do you stay." Madame de Villefort left, and Valentine remained alone beside the bed, for the procureur du roi, overcome with astonishment at the unexpected death, had followed his wife. Meanwhile, Barrois had returned for the first time to old Noirtier, who having heard the noise in the house, had, as we have said, sent his old servant to inquire the cause; on his return, his quick and intelligent eye interrogated the messenger. "Alas, sir!" exclaimed Barrois, "a great misfortune has happened. Madame de Saint-Méran has arrived, and her husband is dead!"

M. de Saint-Méran and Noirtier had never been on strict terms of friendship; still, the death of one old man always considerably affects another. Noirtier let his head fall upon his chest, apparently overwhelmed and thoughtful; then, closing one eye, he inquired, "Mademoiselle Valentine?" Noirtier nodded his head. "She is at the ball, as you know, since she came to say good-bye to you in full dress." Noirtier again closed his left eye. "Do you wish to see her?" Noirtier again made an affirmative sign. "Well, they have gone to fetch her, no doubt, from Madame de Morcerf's; I will await her return, and beg her to come in here. Is that what you wish for?"

"Yes ! I wish to speak to him." Valentine durst not oppose her grandmother's wish, the cause of which she knew not ; and an instant afterwards Villefort entered. "Sir," said Madame de Saint-Méran, without using any circumlocution, and, as if fearing she had no time to lose, "you wrote to me concerning the marriage of this child ?"

"Yes, madame," replied Villefort ; "it is not only projected, but arranged."—"Your intended son-in-law is named M. Franz d'Epinay ?"

"Yes, madame."—"Is he not the son of General d'Epinay, who was on our side, and who was assassinated some days before the usurper returned from the Isle of Elba ?"

"The same."—"Does he not dislike the idea of marrying the granddaughter of a Jacobin ?"

"Our civil dissensions are now happily extinguished, mother," said Villefort ; "M. d'Epinay was quite a child when his father died, he knows very little of M. Noirtier, and will meet him, if not with pleasure, at least with indifference."—"Is it a suitable match ?"

"In every respect."—"And the young man ?"

"Possesses universal esteem."—"You approve of him ?"

"He is one of the most distinguished young men I know." During the whole of this conversation Valentine had remained silent. "Well, sir," said Madame de Saint-Méran, after a few minutes' reflection, "I must hasten the marriage, for I have but a short time to live."

"You, madame ?" "You, dear mamma ?" exclaimed M. de Villefort and Valentine at the same time.

"I know what I am saying," continued the marchioness ; "I must hurry you, so that, having no mother, she may at least have a grandmother to bless her marriage. I am all that is left to her belonging to my poor Renée, whom you have so soon forgotten, sir."—"Ah, madame," said Villefort, "you forget that I was obliged to give a mother to my child."

"A stepmother is never a mother, sir. But this is not to the purpose, our business concerns Valentine ; let us leave the dead in peace."

All this was said with such exceeding rapidity, that there was something in the conversation that seemed like the commencement of delirium.

"It shall be as you wish, madame," said Villefort ; "more especially since your wishes coincide with mine ; and as soon as M. d'Epinay arrives in Paris——"

"My dear mother," interrupted Valentine, "consider decorum—the recent death. You would not have me marry under such sad auspices ?"

"My child," exclaimed the old lady, sharply, "let us hear none of those conventional objections that deter weak minds from forming their fortunes. I also was married at the death-bed of my mother, and certainly I have not been less happy on that account."

"Still that idea of death, madame !" said Villefort.

"Still ?—Always ! I tell you I am going to die—do you understand ? Well, before dying, I wish to see my son-in-law. I wish to tell him to make my child happy ; I wish to read in his eyes whether he intends to obey me ;—in fact, I will know him—I will !" continued the old lady, with a fearful expression, "that I may rise from the depths of my grave to find him, if he should not fulfil his duty !"—"Madame," said Villefort, "you must lay aside these exalted ideas, which almost assume the appearance of madness. The dead, once buried in their graves, rise no more."

"And I tell you, sir, that you are mistaken. This night I have had a fearful sleep. It seemed as though my soul were already hovering over my body ; my eyes, which I tried to open, closed against my will ; and

what will appear impossible above all to you, sir, I saw, with my eyes shut, in the spot where you are now standing, issuing from that corner where there is a door leading into Madame Villefort's dressing-room—I saw, I tell you, silently enter, a white figure." Valentine screamed. "It was the fever that disturbed you, madame," said Villefort.

"Doubt, if you please, but I am sure of what I say. I saw a white figure; and as if to prevent my discrediting the testimony of only one of my senses, I heard my glass removed—the same which is there now on the table."—"Oh! dear mother, it was a dream."

"So little was it a dream, that I stretched my hand towards the bell; but when I did so, the shade disappeared; my maid then entered with a light."—"But she saw no one?"

"Phantoms are visible to those only who ought to see them. It was the soul of my husband!—Well, if my husband's soul can come to me, why should not my soul reappear to guard my grand-daughter? the tie is even more direct, it seems to me."—"Oh! madame," said Villefort, deeply affected, in spite of himself, "do not yield to those gloomy thoughts; you will long live with us, happy, loved, and honoured, and we will make you forget—"

"Never, never, never!" said the marchioness. "When does M. d'Epinaï return?"—"We expect him every moment."

"It is well. As soon as he arrives inform me. We must be expeditious. And then I also wish to see a notary, that I may be assured that all our property returns to Valentine."—"Ah, my mother!" murmured Valentine, pressing her lips on the burning brow of her grandmother, "do you wish to kill me? Oh, how feverish you are! we must not send for a notary, but for a doctor!"

"A doctor!" said she, shrugging her shoulders, "I am not ill; I am

tine," said Madame de Saint-Méran, "and leave me with this gentleman."

—"But, mother——"

"Leave me!—go!" The young girl kissed her grandmother, and left with her handkerchief to her eyes; at the door she found the valet-de-chambre, who told her the doctor was waiting in the dining-room. Valentine instantly ran down. The doctor was a friend of the family, and at the same time one of the cleverest men of the day, and very fond of Valentine, whose birth he had witnessed. He had himself a daughter about her age; but whose life was one continued source of anxiety and fear to him from her mother having been consumptive.

"Oh," said Valentine, "we have been waiting for you with such impatience, dear M. d'Avrigny. But, first of all, how are Madeleine and Antoinette?" Madeleine was the daughter of M. d'Avrigny, and Antoinette his niece. M. d'Avrigny smiled sadly. "Antoinette is very well," he said, "and Madeleine tolerably so. But you sent for me, my dear child. It is not your father or Madame de Villefort who is ill. As for you, although we doctors cannot divest our patients of nerves, I fancy you have no further need of me than to recommend you not to allow your imagination to take too wide a field." Valentine coloured. M. d'Avrigny carried the science of divination almost to a miracle, for he was one of those doctors who always work upon the body through the mind. "No," she replied, "it is for my poor grandmother: you know the calamity that has happened to us, do you not?"

"I know nothing," said M. d'Avrigny.

"Alas!" said Valentine, restraining her tears, "my grandfather is dead."

"M. de Saint-Méran?"—"Yes."

"Suddenly?"—"From an apoplectic stroke."

"An apoplectic stroke?" repeated the doctor.—"Yes! and my poor grandmother fancies that her husband, whom she never left, has called her, and that she must go and join him. Oh, M. d'Avrigny, I beseech you, do something for her!"

"Where is she?"—"In her room with the notary."

"And M. Noirtier?"—"Just as he was, his mind perfectly clear, but the same incapability of moving or speaking."

"And the same love for you—eh, my dear child?"

"Yes," said Valentine; "he was very fond of me."—"Who does not love you?" Valentine smiled sadly. "What are your grandmother's symptoms?"—"An extreme nervous excitement, and a strangely agitated sleep; she fancied this morning in her sleep, that her soul was hovering above her body, which she at the same time watched. It must have been delirium; she fancies, too, that she saw a phantom enter her chamber, and even heard the noise it made on touching her glass."

"It is singular," said the doctor; "I was not aware that Madame de Saint-Méran was subject to such hallucinations."—"It is the first time I ever saw her thus," said Valentine, "and this morning she frightened me so, that I thought her mad; and my father, who you know is a strong-minded man, himself appeared deeply impressed."

"We will go and see," said the doctor; "what you tell me seems very strange." The notary here descended, and Valentine was informed her grandmother was alone. "Go up-stairs," she said to the doctor.

"And you?"—"Oh, I dare not—she forbade my sending for you; and, as you say, I am myself agitated, feverish, and unwell. I will go and take a turn in the garden to recover myself." The doctor pressed Valen-

"You make me tremble!" said the young girl.

"Follow me," said Morrel; "I will take you to my sister, who is worthy also to be yours. We will embark for Algiers, for England, for America, or, if you prefer it, retire to the country, and only return to Paris when our friends have reconciled your family." Valentine shook her head. "I feared it, Maximilian," said she; "it is the counsel of a madman, and I should be more mad than you, did I not stop you at once with the word 'Impossible, Morrel, impossible!'"—"You will then submit to what fate decrees for you without even attempting to contend with it?" said Morrel, sorrowfully. "Yes,—if I die!"

"Well, Valentine," resumed Maximilian, "I again repeat, you are right. Truly, it is I who am mad; and you prove to me that passion blinds the most correct minds. I appreciate your calm reasoning. It is, then, understood, to-morrow you will be irrevocably promised to M. Franz d'Epinay, not only by that theatrical formality invented to heighten the effect of a comedy called the signature of the contract, but your own will?"—"Again you drive me to despair, Maximilian," said Valentine, "again you plunge the dagger into the wound! What would you do,—tell me, if your sister listened to such a proposition?"

"Mademoiselle," replied Morrel, with a bitter smile, "I am selfish—you have already said so—and, as a selfish man, I think not of what others would do in my situation, but of what I intend doing myself. I think only that I have known you now a whole year. From the day I first saw you, all my hopes of happiness have been in securing your affection. One day you acknowledged that you loved me; and since that day my hope of future happiness has rested on obtaining you; for to gain you would be life to me. Now, I think no more; I say only that fortune has turned against me—I had thought to gain heaven, and now I have lost it. It is an every-day occurrence for a gambler to lose not only what he possesses, but also what he has not." Morrel pronounced these words with perfect calmness; Valentine looked at him a moment with her large, scrutinizing eyes, endeavouring not to let Morrel discover the grief which struggled in her heart. "But, in a word, what are you going to do?" asked she.

"I am going to have the honour of taking my leave of you, mademoiselle, solemnly assuring you, that I wish your life may be so calm, so happy, and so fully occupied, that there may be no place for me even in your memory."—"Oh!" murmured Valentine.

"Adieu, Valentine, adieu!" said Morrel, bowing.

"Where are you going?" cried the young girl, extending her hand through the opening, and seizing Maximilian by his coat, for she understood from her own agitated feelings that her lover's calmness could not be real; "where are you going?"—"I am going, that I may not bring fresh trouble into your family; and to set an example which every honest and devoted man, situated as I am, may follow."

"Before you leave me, tell me what you are going to do, Maximilian." The young man smiled sorrowfully. "Speak! speak!" said Valentine; "I entreat you."—"Has your resolution changed, Valentine?"

"It cannot change, unhappy man! you know it must not!" cried the young girl. "Then adieu, Valentine!" Valentine shook the gate with a strength of which she could not have been supposed to be possessed, as Morrel was going away, and passing both her hands through the opening, she clasped and wrung them. "I must know what you mean to do!" said she. "Where are you going?"—"Oh! fear not," said Maximilian,

stopping at a short distance, "I do not intend to render another man responsible for the rigorous fate reserved for me. Another might threaten to seek M. Franz, to provoke him, and to fight with him ; all that would be folly. What has M. Franz to do with it ? He saw me this morning for the first time, and has already forgotten he has seen me. He did not even know I existed when it was arranged by your two families that you should be united. I have no enmity against M. Franz, and promise you the punishment shall not fall on him."

"On whom, then?—on me?"—"On you, Valentine ! Oh, Heaven forbid ! Woman is sacred, the woman one loves is holy."

"On yourself, then, unhappy man ; on yourself ?"

"I am the only guilty person, am I not ?" said Maximilian.

"Maximilian !" said Valentine, "Maximilian, return, I entreat you !" He drew near, with his sweet smile, and, but for his paleness, one might have thought him in his usual happy frame. "Listen, my dear, my adored Valentine," said he in his melodious and grave tone ; "those who, like us, have never had a thought for which we need blush before the world, such may read each other's heart. I never was romantic, and am no melancholy hero. I imitate neither Manfred nor Anthony ; but without words, without protestations and without vows, my life has entwined itself with yours ; you leave me, and you are right in doing so,—I repeat it, you are right ; but in losing you, I lose my life. The moment you leave me, Valentine, I am alone in the world. My sister is happily married ; her husband is only my brother-in-law, that is, a man whom the ties of social life alone attach to me ; no one then longer needs my useless life. This is what I shall do ; I will wait until the very moment you are married, for I will not lose the shadow of one of those unexpected chances which are sometimes reserved for us, for, after all, M. Franz may die before that time ; a thunderbolt may fall even on the altar as you approach it ; nothing appears impossible to one condemned to die, and miracles appear quite reasonable when his escape from death is concerned. I will, then, wait until the last moment, and when my misery is certain, irremediable, hopeless, I will write a confidential letter to my brother-in-law, another to the prefect of police, to acquaint them with my intention, and at the corner of some wood, on the brink of some abyss, on the bank of some river, I will put an end to my existence, as certainly as I am the son of the most honest man who ever lived in France."

Valentine trembled convulsively ; she loosed her hold of the gate, her arms fell by her side, and two large tears rolled down her cheeks. The young man stood before her, sorrowful and resolute. "Oh ! for pity's sake," said she, "you will live, will you not ?"—"No ! on my honour," said Maximilian ; "but that will not affect you. You have done your duty, and your conscience will be at rest." Valentine fell on her knees, and pressed her almost bursting heart. "Maximilian !" said she, "Maximilian, my friend, my brother on earth, my true husband in heaven, I entreat you, do as I do, live in suffering ; perhaps we may one day be united."—"Adieu, Valentine," repeated Morrel.

"My God," said Valentine, raising both her hands to heaven with a sublime expression, "I have done my utmost to remain a submissive daughter ; I have begged, entreated, implored ; he has regarded neither my prayers, my entreaties, nor my tears. It is done," cried she, wiping away her tears, and resuming her firmness, "I am resolved not to die of remorse, but rather of shame. Live, Maximilian, and I will be yours. Say when shall it be ? Speak, command, I will obey." Morrel, who had

already gone some few steps away, again returned, and, pale with joy, extended both hands towards Valentine, through the opening. "Valentine," said he, "dear Valentine, you must not speak thus—rather let me die. Why should I obtain you by violence, if our love is mutual? Is it from mere humanity you bid me live? I would then rather die."—"Truly," murmured Valentine, "who on this earth cares for me, if he does not? Who has consoled me in my sorrow but he? On whom do my hopes rest? On whom does my bleeding heart repose? On him, on him, always on him! Yes, you are right; Maximilian, I will follow you. I will leave the paternal home, I will give up all. Oh! ungrateful girl that I am," cried Valentine, sobbing, "I will give up all, even my dear old grandfather, whom I had nearly forgotten."

"No," said Maximilian, "you shall not leave him. Mr. Noirtier has evinced, you say, a kind feeling towards me. Well! before you leave, tell him all; his consent would be your justification in God's sight. As soon as we are married, he shall come and live with us; instead of one child, he shall have two. You have told me how you talk to him, and how he answers you; I shall very soon learn that language by signs, Valentine; and I promise you solemnly, that instead of despair, it is happiness that awaits us."—"Oh! see, Maximilian, see the power you have over me, you almost make me believe you; and yet, what you tell me is madness, for my father will curse me—he is inflexible—he will never pardon me. Now listen to me, Maximilian; if by artifice, by entreaty, by accident—in short, if by any means I can delay this marriage, will you wait?"

"Yes, I promise you, as faithfully as you have promised me, that this horrible marriage shall not take place, and that if you are dragged before a magistrate or a priest, you will refuse."—"I promise you by all that is most sacred to me in the world, namely, by my mother."

girl, sorrowfully.—“My adored Valentine, words cannot express one half of my satisfaction.” Valentine had approached, or rather, had placed her lips so near the fence, that they nearly touched those of Morrel, which were pressed against the other side of the cold and inexorable barrier. “Adieu, then, till we meet again,” said Valentine, tearing herself away. “I shall hear from you?”—“Yes.”

“Thanks, thanks, dear love, adieu !” The sound of a kiss was heard, and Valentine fled through the avenue. Morrel listened to catch the last sound of her dress brushing the branches, and of her footstep on the path, then raised his eyes with an ineffable smile of thankfulness to heaven for being permitted to be thus loved, and then also disappeared. The young man returned home and waited all the evening and all the next day without hearing anything. It was only on the following day, at about ten o'clock in the morning, as he was starting to call on M. Deschamps, the notary, that he received from the postman a small billet, which he knew to be from Valentine, although he had not before seen her writing. It was to this effect :—

“Tears, entreaties, prayers, have availed me nothing. Yesterday, for two hours, I was at the church of Saint Philippe du Roule, and for two hours I prayed most fervently. Heaven is as inflexible as man, and the signature of the contract is fixed for this evening at nine o'clock. I have but one promise and but one heart to give ; that promise is pledged to you, that heart is also yours. This evening, then, at a quarter past nine, at the gate.

“Your betrothed,

“VALENTINE DE VILLEFORT.”

“P.S.—My poor grandmother gets worse and worse ; yesterday her fever amounted to delirium ; to-day her delirium is almost madness. You will be very kind to me, will you not, Morrel, to make me forget my sorrow in leaving her thus ? I think it is kept a secret from grandpapa Noirtier, that the contract is to be signed this evening.”

Morrel went also to the notary, who confirmed his account of the proposed signature. Then he went to call on Monte-Cristo, and heard still more. Franz had been to announce the solemnity, and Madame de Villefort had also written to beg the count to excuse her not inviting him ; the death of M. de Saint-Méran, and the dangerous illness of his widow, would cast a gloom over the meeting which she would regret the count should share, whom she wished might enjoy every happiness. The day before, Franz had been presented to Madame de Saint-Méran, who had left her bed to receive him, but had been obliged to return to it immediately after. It is easy to suppose that Morrel's agitation would not escape the count's penetrating eye. Monte-Cristo was more affectionate than ever,—indeed, his manner was so kind, that several times Morrel was on the point of telling him all. But he recalled the promise he had made to Valentine, and kept his secret. The young man read Valentine's letter twenty times in the course of the day. It was her first, and on what an occasion ! Each time he read it he renewed his vow to make her happy. How great is the authority of one who has made so courageous a resolution ! What devotion does she deserve from him for whom she has sacrificed everything ! How ought she really to be supremely loved ? She becomes at once a queen and a wife, and it is impossible to thank and love her sufficiently. Morrel longed intensely for the moment when he should hear Valentine say, “Here I am, Maximilian ; come and help me.” He

had arranged everything for her escape ; two ladders were hidden in the clover-field ; a cabriolet was ordered for Maximilian alone, without a servant, without lights ; at the turning of the first street they would light the lamps, as it would be foolish to attract the notice of the police by too many precautions. Occasionally he shuddered ; he thought of the moment when, from the top of that wall, he should protect the descent of his dear Valentine, pressing in his arms for the first time her of whom he had yet only kissed the delicate hand.

When the afternoon arrived, and he felt the hour was drawing near, he wished for solitude, his agitation was extreme ; a simple question from a friend would have irritated him. He shut himself in his room, and tried to read ; but his eye glanced over the page without understanding a word, and he threw away the book, and for the second time sat down to sketch his plan, the ladders, and the fence. At length the hour drew near. Never did a man deeply in love allow the clocks to go on peacefully. Morrel tormented his so effectually that they struck eight at half-past six. He then said, "It is time to start : the signature was indeed fixed to take place at nine o'clock, but perhaps Valentine will not wait for that." Consequently, Morrel, having left the Rue Meslay at half-past eight by his timepiece, entered the clover-field while the clock of Saint Phillippe du Roule was striking eight. The horse and cabriolet were concealed behind a small ruin, where Morrel had often waited. The night gradually drew on, and the foliage in the garden assumed a deeper hue. Then Morrel came out from his hiding-place with a beating heart, and looked through the small opening in the paling ; there was yet no one to be seen. The clock struck half-past eight, and still another half-hour was passed in waiting, while Morrel looked to and fro, and gazed more and more frequently through the opening. The garden became darker still, but in the darkness he

to wait longer, his temples throbbed violently, his eyes were growing dim ; he passed one leg over the wall, and in a moment leaped down on the other side. He was on Villefort's premises—had arrived there by scaling the wall. What might be the consequences ? However, he had not ventured thus far to draw back. He followed a short distance close under the wall, then crossed a path, and entered a clump of trees. In a moment he had passed through them, and could see the house distinctly. Then Morrel was convinced of one thing : instead of lights at every window, as is customary on days of ceremony, he saw only a grey mass, which was veiled also by a cloud, which at that moment obscured the moon's feeble light. A light moved rapidly from time to time past three windows of the first floor. These three windows were in Madame de Saint-Méran's room. Another remained motionless behind some red curtains which were in Madame de Villefort's bedroom. Morrel guessed all this. So many times, in order to follow Valentine in thought at every hour in the day, had he made her describe all the house, that, without having seen it, he knew it all. This darkness and silence alarmed Morrel still more than Valentine's absence had done. Almost mad with grief, and determined to venture everything in order to see Valentine once more, and be certain of the misfortune he feared, Morrel gained the edge of the clump of trees, and was going to pass as quickly as possible through the flower-garden, when the sound of a voice, still at some distance, but which was borne upon the wind, reached him. At this sound, as he was already partially exposed to view, he stepped back and concealed himself completely, remaining perfectly motionless. He had formed his resolution : if it was Valentine alone, he would speak as she passed ; if she was accompanied, and he could not speak, still he should see her, and know that she was safe ; if they were strangers, he would listen to their conversation, and might understand something of this hitherto incomprehensible mystery. The moon had just then escaped from behind the cloud, which had concealed it, and Morrel saw Villefort come out upon the steps, followed by a gentleman in black. They descended, and advanced towards the clump of trees, and Morrel soon recognised the other gentleman as Doctor d'Avrigny.

The young man, seeing them approach, drew back mechanically, until he found himself stopped by a sycamore-tree in the centre of the clump ; there he was compelled to remain. Soon the two gentlemen stopped also.

"Ah, my dear doctor," said the procureur, "Heaven declares itself against my house ! What a dreadful death—what a blow ! Seek not to console me ; alas ! nothing can alleviate so great a sorrow—the wound is too deep and too fresh ! She is dead ! she is dead !" A cold dampness covered the young man's brow, and his teeth chattered. Who could be dead in that house, which Villefort himself had called accursed ? "My dear M. de Villefort," replied the doctor, with a tone which redoubled the terror of the young man, "I have not led you here to console you ; on the contrary——"

"What can you mean ?" asked the procureur, alarmed.

"I mean that, behind the misfortune which has just happened to you, there is another, perhaps, still greater."—"Can it be possible ?" murmured Villefort, clasping his hands. "What are you going to tell me ?"

"Are we quite alone, my friend ?"

"Yes, quite ; but why all these precautions ?"—"Because I have a terrible secret to communicate to you," said the doctor. "Let us sit down."

Villefort fell, rather than seated himself. The doctor stood before him, with one hand placed on his shoulder. Morrel, horrified, supported his

head with one hand, and with the other pressed his heart, lest its beatings should be heard. "Dead ! dead !" repeated he within himself ; and he felt as if he were also dying.

"Speak, doctor—I am listening," said Villefort ; "strike—I am prepared for everything !"—"Madame de Saint-Méran was, doubtless, advancing in years, but she enjoyed excellent health." Morrel began again to breathe freely, which he had not done the last ten minutes.

"Grief has consumed her," said Villefort—"yes, grief, doctor ! After living forty years with the marquis——"

"It is not grief, my dear Villefort," said the doctor ; "grief may kill, although it rarely does, and never in a day, never in an hour, never in ten minutes." Villefort answered nothing ; he simply raised his head, which had been cast down before, and looked at the doctor with amazement.

"Were you present during the last struggle?" asked M. d'Avrigny.

"I was," replied the procureur ; "you begged me not to leave."

"Did you notice the symptoms of the disease to which Madame de Saint-Méran has fallen a victim?"

"I did. Madame de Saint-Méran had three successive attacks, at intervals of some minutes, each one more serious than the former. When you arrived, Madame de Saint-Méran had already been panting for breath some minutes ; she then had a fit, which I took to be simply a nervous attack, and it was only when I saw her raise herself in the bed, and her limbs and neck appear stiffened, that I became really alarmed. Then I understood from your countenance there was more to fear than I had thought. This crisis past, I endeavoured to catch your eye, but could not. You held her hand—you were feeling her pulse—and the second fit came on before you had turned towards me. This was more terrible than the first : the same nervous movements were repeated, and the mouth con-

you, my dear doctor, that you may be deceived."—"Doubtless I may, but——"

"But?"—"But I do not think so."

"Have pity on me, doctor! So many dreadful things have happened to me lately that I am on the verge of madness."

"Has any one besides me seen Madame de Saint-Méran?"—"No."

"Has anything been sent for from a chemist's that I have not examined?"

"Nothing."

"Had Madame de Saint Méran any enemies?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Would her death affect any one's interest?"—"It could not indeed; my daughter is her only heiress—Valentine alone. Oh, if such a thought could present itself, I would stab myself to punish my heart for having for one instant harboured it."

"Indeed, my dear friend," said M. d'Avrigny, "I would not accuse any one; I speak only of an accident, you understand; of a mistake: but whether accident or mistake, the fact is there; it speaks to my conscience, and compels me to speak aloud to you. Make inquiry."

"Of whom?—how?—of what?"

"May not Barrois, the old servant, have made a mistake, and have given Madame de Saint-Méran a dose prepared for his master?"

"For my father?"—"Yes."

"But how could a dose prepared for M. Noirtier poison Madame de Saint-Méran?"—"Nothing is more simple. You know poisons become remedies in certain diseases, of which paralysis is one. For instance, having tried every other remedy to restore movement and speech to M. Noirtier, I resolved to try one last means, and for three months I have been giving him brucine; so that in the last dose I ordered for him there were six grains. This quantity, which it is perfectly safe to administer to the paralyzed frame of M. Noirtier, which has become gradually accustomed to it, would be sufficient to kill another person."

"My dear doctor, there is no communication between M. Noirtier's apartment and that of Madame de Saint-Méran, and Barrois never entered my mother-in-law's room. In short, doctor, although I know you to be the most conscientious man in the world, and although I place the utmost reliance in you, I want, notwithstanding my conviction, to believe this axiom, *errare humanum est*."—"Is there one of my brethren in whom you have equal confidence with myself?"

"Why do you ask me that?—what do you wish?"

"Send for him; I will tell him what I have seen, and we will consult together, and examine the body."

"And you will find traces of poison?"—"No, I did not say of poison, but we can prove what was the state of the body: we shall discover the cause of her sudden death, and we shall say, 'Dear Villefort, if this thing has been caused by negligence, watch over your servants; if from hatred, watch your enemies.'"

"What do you propose to me, D'Avrigny?" said Villefort in despair; "so soon as another is admitted into our secret, an inquest will become necessary; and an inquest in my house—impossible! Still," continued the *procureur*, looking at the doctor with uneasiness, "if you wish it—if you demand it, it shall be done. But, doctor, you see me already so grieved—how can I introduce into my house so much scandal, after so much sorrow? My wife and my daughter would die of it! And I, doctor—you know a man does not arrive at the post I occupy—one has

not been *procureur du roi* twenty-five years without having amassed a tolerable number of enemies ; mine are numerous. Let this affair be talked of, it will be a triumph for them, which will make them rejoice, and cover me with shame. Pardon me, doctor, these worldly ideas ; were you a priest I should not dare tell you that ; but you are a man, and you know mankind. Doctor, pray recall your words ; you have said nothing, have you ?”

“ My dear M. de Villefort,” replied the doctor, “ my first duty is humanity. I would have saved Madame de Saint-Méran, if science could have done it ; but she is dead, my duty regards the living. Let us bury this terrible secret in the deepest recesses of our hearts ; I am willing, if any one should suspect this, that my silence on this subject should be imputed to my ignorance. Meanwhile, sir, watch always—watch carefully, for, perhaps, the evil may not stop here. And when you have found the culprit, if you find him, I will say to you, ‘ You are a magistrate, do as you will ! ’ ”

“ I thank you, doctor,” said Villefort, with indescribable joy ; “ I never had a better friend than you.” And, as if he feared Doctor d’Avrigny would recall his promise, he hurried him towards the house.

When they were gone, Morrel ventured out from under the trees, and the moon shone upon his face, which was so pale it might have been taken for a phantom. “ I am manifestly protected in a most wonderful, but most terrible manner,” said he ; “ but Valentine, poor girl ! how will she bear so much sorrow ? ”

As he thought thus, he looked alternately at the window with red curtains and the three windows with white curtains. The light had almost disappeared from the former : doubtless Madame de Villefort had just put out her lamp, and the night-lamp alone reflected its dull light on the window. At the extremity of the building on the contrary he saw one of the three

and sanction the love which united him to his daughter, and his daughter to him. Morrel was mad. Happily he did not meet any one. Now, especially, did he find the description Valentine had given of the interior of the house useful to him; he arrived safely at the top of the staircase, and while feeling his way, a sob indicated the direction he was to take; he turned back: a door partly open enabled him to see his road, and to hear the sorrowing voice. He pushed it open and entered. At the other end of the room, under a white sheet which covered it, lay the corpse, still more alarming to Morrel since the account he had so unexpectedly overheard. By the side, on her knees, and her head buried in the cushion of an easy chair, was Valentine, trembling and sobbing, her hands extended above her head, clasped and stiff. She had turned from the window, which remained open, and was praying in accents that would have affected the most unfeeling; her words were rapid, incoherent, unintelligible; for the burning weight of grief almost stopped her utterance. The moon shining through the open blinds made the lamp appear to burn paler, and cast a sepulchral hue over the whole scene. Morrel could not resist this; he was not exemplary for piety, he was not easily impressed, but Valentine suffering, weeping, wringing her hands before him, was more than he could bear in silence. He sighed, and whispered a name, and the head bathed in tears and pressed on the velvet cushion of the chair—a head resembling a Magdalen by Correggio, was raised and turned towards him. Valentine perceived him without betraying the least surprise. A heart overwhelmed with one great grief is insensible to minor emotions. Morrel held out his hand to her. Valentine, as her only apology for not having met him, pointed to the corpse under the sheet, and began to sob again. Neither dared for some time to speak in that room. They hesitated to break the silence which death seemed to impose; at length Valentine ventured.

"My friend," said she, "how came you here? Alas, I would say you are welcome, had not death opened the way for you into this house."

"Valentine," said Morrel, with a trembling voice, "I had waited since half-past eight, and did not see you come; I became uneasy, leaped the wall, found my way through the garden, when voices conversing about the fatal event——"

"What voices?" asked Valentine. Morrel shuddered as he thought of the conversation of the doctor and M. de Villefort, and he thought he could see through the sheet the extended hands, the stiff neck, and the purple lips.—"Your servants," said he, "who were repeating the whole of the sorrowful story; from them I learned it all."

"But it was risking the failure of our plan to come up here, love."

"Forgive me," replied Morrel; "I will go away."

"No," said Valentine, "you might meet some one; stay."

"But if any one should come here——"

The young girl shook her head. "No one will come," said she; "do not fear, there is our safeguard," pointing to the bed.

"But what has become of M. d'Epinay?" replied Morrel.

"M. Franz arrived to sign the contract just as my dear grandmother was dying."—"Alas!" said Morrel, with a feeling of selfish joy; for he thought this death would cause the wedding to be postponed indefinitely. "But what redoubles my sorrow," continued the young girl, as if this feeling was to receive its immediate punishment, "is that the poor old lady, on her death-bed, requested the marriage might take place as soon as possible; she also, thinking to protect me, was acting against me."

"Hark!" said Morrel. They both listened; steps were distinctly heard

in the corridor and on the stairs.—“It is my father, who has just left his cabinet.”

“To accompany the doctor to the door,” added Morrel.

“How do you know it is the doctor?” asked Valentine, astonished.

“I imagine it must be,” said Morrel. Valentine looked at the young man; they heard the street-door close; then M. de Villefort locked the garden-door, and returned upstairs. He stopped a moment in the ante-room, as if hesitating whether to turn to his own apartment or into Madame de Saint-Méran’s; Morrel concealed himself behind a door; Valentine remained motionless, grief seemed to deprive her of all fear. M. de Villefort passed on to his own room. “Now,” said Valentine, “you can neither go out by the front-door nor by the garden.” Morrel looked at her with astonishment. “There is but one way left you that is safe,” said she; “it is through my grandfather’s room.” She rose, “Come,” she added.—“Where?” asked Maximilian.

“To my grandfather’s room.”—“I in M. Noirtier’s apartment?”

“Yes.”—“Can you mean it, Valentine?”

“I have long wished it; he is my only remaining friend, and we both need his help,—come.”—“Be careful, Valentine,” said Morrel, hesitating to comply with the young girl’s wishes; “I now see my error—I acted as a madman in coming in here. Are you sure you are more reasonable?”

“Yes,” said Valentine; “and I have but one scruple, namely, that of leaving my dear grandmother’s remains, which I had undertaken to watch.”—“Valentine,” said Morrel, “death is in itself sacred.”

“Yes,” said Valentine; “besides, it will not be for long.” She then crossed the corridor, and led the way down a narrow staircase to M. Noirtier’s room; Morrel followed her on tiptoe; at the door they found the old servant. “Barrois,” said Valentine, “shut the door, and let no one come in.” She passed first. Noirtier, seated in his chair, and listening to every sound, was watching the door: he saw Valentine, and his eye brightened. There was something grave and solemn in the approach of the young girl which struck the old man, and immediately his bright eye began to interrogate. “Dear grandfather,” said she hurriedly, “you know poor grandmamma died an hour since, and now I have no friend in the world but you.” His expressive eyes evinced the greatest tenderness. “To you alone, then, may I confide my sorrows and my hopes?” The paralytic motioned “Yes.” Valentine took Maximilian’s hand. “Look attentively, then, at this gentleman.” The old man fixed his scrutinising gaze with slight astonishment on Morrel. “It is M. Maximilian Morrel,” said she; “the son of that good merchant of Marseilles, whom you doubtless recollect.”

“Yes,” said the old man. “He brings an irreproachable name, which Maximilian is likely to render glorious, since at thirty years of age he is a captain, an officer of the Legion of Honour.” The old man signified that he recollected him. “Well, grandpapa,” said Valentine, kneeling before him, and pointing to Maximilian, “I love him, and will be only his; were I compelled to marry another, I would destroy myself.”

The eyes of the paralytic expressed a multitude of tumultuous thoughts. “You like M. Maximilian Morrel; do you not, grandpapa?” asked Valentine.—“Yes.”

“And you will protect us, who are your children, against the will of my father?”—Noirtier cast an intelligent glance at Morrel, as if to say, “Perhaps I may.” Maximilian understood him.—“Mademoiselle,” said he, “you have a sacred duty to fulfil in your deceased grandmother’s

from, will you allow me the honour of a few minutes conversation with M. Noirtier?"—"That is it," said the old man's eye. Then he looked anxiously at Valentine.

"Do you fear he will not understand you?"—"Yes."

"Oh! we have so often spoken of you, that he knows exactly how I talk to you." Then turning to Maximilian, with an adorable smile, although shaded by sorrow,—“He knows everything I know,” said she.

Valentine rose, placed a chair for Morrel, requested Barrois not to admit any one, and having tenderly embraced her grandpapa, and sorrowfully taken leave of Morrel, she went away. To prove to Noirtier that he was in Valentine's confidence and knew all their secrets, Morrel took the dictionary, a pen, and some paper, and placed them all on a table where there was a light.

"But first," said Morrel, "allow me, sir, to tell you who I am, how much I love Mademoiselle Valentine, and what are my designs respecting her." Noirtier made a sign that he would listen.

It was an imposing sight to witness this old man, apparently a mere useless burden, becoming the sole protector, support, and adviser of the lovers, who were both young, beautiful, and strong. His remarkably noble and austere expression struck Morrel, who began his recital with trembling. He related the manner in which he had become acquainted with Valentine, and how he had loved her; and that Valentine, in her solitude and her misfortune, had accepted the offer of his devotion. He told him his birth, his position, his fortune; and more than once, when he consulted the look of the paralytic, that look answered, "That is good, proceed."

"And now," said Morrel, when he had finished the first part of his recital, "now I have told you of my love and my hopes, may I inform you of my intentions?"—"Yes," signified the old man.

"This was our resolution: a cabriolet was in waiting at the gate, in which I intended to carry off Valentine to my sister's house, to marry her, and to wait respectfully M. de Villefort's pardon."

"No," said Noirtier.

"We must not do so?"—"No."

"You do not sanction our project?"—"No."

"There is another way," said Morrel. The old man's interrogative eye said, "Which?"—"I will go," continued Maximilian, "I will seek M. Franz d'Epinay—I am happy to be able to mention this in Mademoiselle de Villefort's absence—and will conduct myself toward him so as to compel him to challenge me." Noirtier's look continued to interrogate. "You wish to know what I will do?"—"Yes."

"I will find him, as I told you, I will tell him the ties which bind me to Mademoiselle Valentine; if he be a sensible man, he will prove it by renouncing of his own accord the hand of his betrothed, and will secure my friendship and love until death; if he refuse, either through interest or ridiculous pride, after I have proved to him that he would be forcing my wife from me, that Valentine loves me, and will love no other, I will fight with him, give him every advantage, and I shall kill him, or he will kill me; if I am victorious, he will not marry Valentine, and if I die, I am very sure Valentine will not marry him." Noirtier watched, with indescribable pleasure, this noble and sincere countenance, on which every sentiment his tongue uttered was depicted, adding by the expression of his fine features all that colouring adds to a sound and faithful drawing. Still when Morrel had finished, he shut his eyes several times, which was b

manner of saying "No."—"No?" said Morrel; "you disapprove of this second project, as you did of the first?"

"I do," signified the old man.

"But what must then be done?" asked Morrel. "Madame de Saint-Méran's last request was, that the marriage might not be delayed; must I let things take their course?" Noirtier did not move. "I understand," said Morrel; "I am to wait."—"Yes."

"But delay may ruin our plan, sir," replied the young man. "Alone, Valentine has no power; she will be compelled to submit. I am here almost miraculously, and can scarcely hope for so good an opportunity to occur again. Believe me, there are only the two plans I have proposed to you; forgive my vanity, and tell me which you prefer. Do you authorise Mademoiselle Valentine to intrust herself to my honour?"

"No."

"Do you prefer I should seek M. d'Épinay?"—"No."

"Whence then will come the help we need—from chance?" resumed Morrel. "No."—"From you?"—"Yes."

"You thoroughly understand me, sir? Pardon my eagerness, for my life depends on your answer. Will our help come from you?"

"Yes."—"You are sure of it?"—"Yes." There was so much firmness in the look which gave this answer, no one could, at any rate, doubt his will, if they did his power. "Oh, thank you a thousand times! But how, unless a miracle should restore your speech, your gesture, your movement, how can you, chained to that arm-chair, dumb and motionless, oppose this marriage?" A smile lit up the old man's face, a strange smile of the eyes on a paralyzed face. "Then I must wait?" asked the young man.

"Yes."—"But the contract?" The same smile returned. "Will you

pression could not be understood. The young man pressed his lips on the same spot, on the old man's forehead, where Valentine's had been. Then he bowed a second time and retired. He found the old servant outside the door, to whom Valentine had given directions; he conducted Morrel along a dark passage, which led to a little door opening on the garden. Morrel soon found the spot where he had entered; with the assistance of the shrubs he gained the top of the wall, and by his ladder was, in an instant, in the clover-field, where his cabriolet was still waiting for him. He got in it, and thoroughly wearied by so many emotions, he arrived about midnight in the Rue Meslay, threw himself on his bed, and slept soundly.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE VILLEFORT FAMILY VAULT.

TWO days after, a considerable crowd was assembled, towards ten o'clock in the morning, round the door of M. de Villefort's house, and a long file of mourning-coaches and private carriages extended along the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Rue de la Pépinière. Among them was one of a very singular form, which appeared to have come from a distance. It was a kind of covered waggon, painted black, and was one of the first at the rendezvous. Inquiry was made, and it was ascertained that, by a strange coincidence, this carriage contained the corpse of the Marquis de Saint-Méran, and that those who had come, thinking to attend one funeral, would follow two. Their number was great. The Marquis de Saint-Méran, one of the most zealous and faithful dignitaries of Louis XVIII. and King Charles X., had preserved a great number of friends, and these, added to the personages whom the usages of society gave Villefort a claim on, formed a considerable body.

Due information was given to the authorities, and permission obtained that the two funerals should take place at the same time. A second hearse, decked with the same funereal pomp, was brought to M. de Villefort's door, and the coffin removed into it from the post-waggon. The two bodies were to be interred in the cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, where M. de Villefort had long since had a tomb prepared for the reception of his family. The remains of poor Renée were already deposited there, whom, after ten years of separation, her father and mother were now going to rejoin. The Parisians, always curious, always affected by funereal display, looked on with religious silence, while the splendid procession accompanied to their last abode two of the number of the old aristocracy—the greatest protectors of commerce and sincere devotees to their principles. In one of the mourning-coaches Beauchamp, Debray, and Château-Renaud were talking of the very sudden death of the marchioness. "I saw Madame de Saint-Méran only last year at Marseilles, and should have supposed she might have lived to be a hundred years old, from her apparent sound health and great activity of mind and body. How old was she?"—"Franz assured me," replied Albert, "that she was seventy years old. But she has not died of old age, but of grief; it appears, since the death of the marquis, which affected her very deeply, she has not completely recovered her reason."

"But of what disease did she, then, die?" asked Debray.

"It is said to have been a congestion of the brain, or apoplexy, which is the same thing, is it not?"—"Nearly."

"It is difficult to believe it was apoplexy," said Beauchamp. "Madame

de Saint-Méran, whom I once saw, was short, of slender form, and of a much more nervous than sanguine temperament ; grief could hardly produce apoplexy in such a constitution as that of Madame de Saint-Méran." — "At any rate," said Albert, "whatever disease or doctor may have killed her, M. de Villefort, or rather, Mademoiselle Valentine,—or, still rather, our friend Franz, inherits a magnificent fortune, amounting, I believe, to 80,000 livres per annum."

"And this fortune will be doubled at the death of the old Jacobin, Noirtier."—"That is a tenacious old grandfather," said Beauchamp. "*Tenacem propositi virum*. I think he must have made an agreement with Death to outlive all his heirs, and he appears likely to succeed. He resembles the old Conventionalist of '93, who said to Napoleon, in 1814, 'You bend because your empire is a young stem, weakened by rapid growth. Take the Republic for a tutor ; let us return with renewed strength to the battle-field, and I promise you 500,000 soldiers, another Marengo, and a second Austerlitz. Ideas do not become extinct, sire ; they slumber sometimes, but only revive the stronger before they sleep entirely.' Ideas and men appear the same to him. One thing only puzzles me, namely, how Franz d'Epinay will like a grandfather who cannot be separated from his wife. But where is Franz?"—"In the first carriage, with M. de Villefort, who considers him already as one of the family."

Such was the conversation in almost all the carriages ; these two sudden deaths, so quickly following each other, astonished every one ; but no one suspected the terrible secret which M. d'Avrigny had communicated, in his nocturnal walk, to M. de Villefort. They arrived in about an hour at the cemetery ; the weather was mild, but dull, and in harmony with the funeral ceremony. Among the groups which flocked towards the family vault, Château-Renaud recognised Morrel, who had come alone in a cabriolet, and walked silently along the path bordered with yew-trees. "You here !" said Château-Renaud, passing his arms through the young captain's ; "are you a friend of Villefort's ? How is it I have never met you at his house ?"—"I am no acquaintance of M. de Villefort's," answered Morrel, "but I was of Madame de Saint-Méran." Albert came up to them at this moment with Franz.

"The time and place are but ill-suited for an introduction," said Albert ; "but we are not superstitious. M. Morrel, allow me to present to you M. Franz d'Epinay, a delightful travelling companion, with whom I made the tour of Italy. My dear Franz, M. Maximilian Morrel, an excellent friend I have acquired in your absence, and whose name you will hear me mention every time I make any allusion to affliction, wit, or amiability." Morrel hesitated for a moment : he feared it would be hypocritical to accost in a friendly manner the man whom he was tacitly opposing, but his oath and the gravity of the circumstances recurred to his memory ; he struggled to conceal his emotion, and bowed to Franz. "Mademoiselle de Villefort is in deep sorrow, is she not ?" said Debray to Franz.

"Extremely," replied he : "she looked so pale this morning, I scarcely knew her." These apparently simple words pierced Morrel to the heart. This man had then seen Valentine, and spoken to her ! The young and high-spirited officer required all his strength of mind to resist breaking his oath. He took the arm of Château-Renaud, and turned towards the vault, where the attendants had already placed the two coffins. "This is a magnificent habitation," said Beauchamp, looking towards the mausoleum, "a summer and winter palace. You will, in turn, enter it, my dear d'Epinay, for you will soon be numbered as one of the family. I, as a philosopher,

should like a little country-house, a cottage down there under the trees, without so many free-stones over my poor body. In dying, I will say to those around me what Voltaire wrote to Piron : ‘ *Eurus*, and all will be over.’ But come, Franz, take courage, your wife is an heiress.”——“Indeed, Beauchamp, you are unbearable. Politics have made you laugh at everything, and political men have made you disbelieve everything. But when you have the honour of associating with ordinary men, and the pleasure of leaving politics for a moment, try to find your affectionate heart, which you leave with your stick when you go to the *Chambre*.”

“But tell me,” said Beauchamp, “what is life? Is it not a hall in Death’s anteroom?”——“I am prejudiced against Beauchamp,” said Albert, drawing Franz away, and leaving the former to finish his philosophical dissertation with Debray. The Villefort vault formed a square of white stones, about twenty feet high; an interior partition separated the two families, and each compartment had its entrance door. Here were not, as in other tombs, those ignoble drawers, one above another, where economy encloses its dead with an inscription resembling a ticket; all that was visible within the bronze gates was a gloomy-looking room, separated by a wall from the vault itself. The two doors before-mentioned were in the middle of this wall, and enclosed the Villefort and Saint-Méran coffins. There grief might freely expend itself without being disturbed by the trifling loungers who came from a pic-nic party to visit Père-la-Chaise, or by lovers who make it their rendezvous.

The two coffins were placed on trestles previously prepared for their reception in the right-hand division belonging to the Saint-Méran family. Villefort, Franz, and a few near relatives alone entered the sanctuary.

As the religious ceremonies had all been performed at the door, and there was no address given, the party all separated; Château-Renaud, Albert, and Morrel, went one way, and Debray and Beauchamp the other. Franz remained with M. de Villefort; at the gate of the cemetery Morrel made an excuse to wait; he saw Franz and M. de Villefort get into the same mourning coach, and thought this *tête-à-tête* foreboded evil. He then returned to Paris, and although in the same carriage with Château-Renaud and Albert, he did not hear one word of their conversation. As Franz was about to take leave of M. Villefort, “When shall I see you again?” said the latter.

“At what time you please, sir,” replied Franz.

“As soon as possible.”

“I am at your command, sir; shall we return together?”

“If not unpleasant to you.”——“On the contrary, I shall feel much pleasure.” Thus, the future father and son-in-law stepped into the same carriage, and Morrel, seeing them pass, became uneasy. Villefort and Franz returned to the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. The *procureur*, without going to see either his wife or his daughter, passed rapidly to his cabinet, and, offering the young man a chair,——“M. d’Epinay,” said he, “allow me to remind you at this moment, which is, perhaps, not so ill-chosen as at first sight may appear, for obedience to the wishes of the departed is the first offering which should be made at their tomb; allow me, then, to remind you of the wish expressed by Madame de Saint-Méran on her death-bed, that Valentine’s wedding might not be deferred. You know the affairs of the deceased are in perfect order, and her will bequeaths to Valentine the entire property of the Saint-Méran family; the notary showed me the documents yesterday, which will enable us to draw up the contract immediately. You may call on the notary, M. Deschamps, Place

Beauvau, Faubourg Saint-Honoré, and you have my authority to inspect those deeds."—"Sir," replied M. d'Epinay, "it is not, perhaps, the moment for Mademoiselle Valentine, who is in deep distress, to think of a husband ; indeed, I fear——"

"Valentine will have no greater pleasure than that of fulfilling her grand-mamma's last injunctions ; there will be no obstacle from that quarter, I assure you."—"In that case," replied Franz, "as I shall raise none, you may make arrangements when you please ; I have pledged my word, and shall feel pleasure and happiness in adhering to it."

"Then," said Villefort, "nothing further is required ; the contract was to have been signed three days since ; we shall find it all ready, and can sign it to-day."—"But the mourning?" said Franz, hesitating.

"Fear not," replied Villefort ; "no ceremony will be neglected in my house. Mademoiselle de Villefort may retire during the prescribed three months to her estate of Saint-Méran ; I say hers, for she inherits it to-day. There, after a few days, if you like, the civil marriage shall be celebrated without pomp or ceremony. Madame de Saint-Méran wished her daughter should be married there. When that is over, you, sir, can return to Paris, while your wife passes the time of her mourning with her mother-in-law."

"As you please, sir," said Franz.

"Then," replied M. de Villefort, "have the kindness to wait half an hour ; Valentine shall come down into the drawing-room. I will send for M. Deschamps ; we will read and sign the contract before we separate, and this evening Madame de Villefort shall accompany Valentine to her estate, where we will rejoin them in a week."

"Sir," said Franz, "I have one request to make."

"What is it?"—"I wish Albert de Morcerf and Raoul de Château-

over her child, it was difficult to read the expression of her face. M. de Villefort was, as usual, unmoved.

The notary, after having, according to the customary method, arranged the papers on the table, taken his place in an arm-chair, and raised his spectacles, turned towards Franz :—"Are you M. Franz de Quesnel, baron d'Epinay?" asked he, although he knew it perfectly.

"Yes, sir," replied Franz. The notary bowed. "I have, then, to inform you, sir, at the request of M. de Villefort, that your projected marriage with Mademoiselle de Villefort has changed the feeling of M. Noirtier towards his grandchild; and that he disinherits her entirely of the fortune he would have left her. Let me hasten to add," continued he, "that the testator, having only the right to alienate a part of his fortune, and having alienated it all, the will will not bear scrutiny, and is declared null and void."—"Yes," said Villefort; but I warn M. d'Epinay, that during my lifetime my father's will shall never be scrutinised, my position forbidding any doubt to be entertained."

"Sir," said Franz, "I regret much such a question has been raised in the presence of Mademoiselle Valentine; I have never inquired the amount of her fortune, which, however limited it may be, exceeds mine. My family has sought consideration in this alliance with M. de Villefort; all I seek is happiness." Valentine imperceptibly thanked him, while two silent tears rolled down her cheeks. "Besides, sir," said Villefort, addressing himself to his future son-in-law, "excepting the loss of a portion of your hopes, this unexpected will need not personally wound you; M. Noirtier's weakness of mind sufficiently explains it. It is not because Mademoiselle Valentine is going to marry you that he is angry, but because she will marry; a union with any other would have caused him the same sorrow. Old age is selfish, sir, and Mademoiselle de Villefort has been a faithful companion to M. Noirtier, which she cannot be when Madame la baronne d'Epinay. My father's melancholy state prevents our speaking to him on many subjects, which the weakness of his mind would incapacitate him from understanding, and I am perfectly convinced that at the present time, although he knows his granddaughter is going to be married, M. Noirtier has even forgotten the name of his intended grandson." M. de Villefort had scarcely said this, when the door opened, and Barrois appeared.

"Gentlemen," said he, in a tone strangely firm for a servant speaking to his masters under such solemn circumstances,—“gentlemen, M. Noirtier de Villefort wishes to speak immediately to M. Franz de Quesnel, baron d'Epinay.” he, as well as the notary, that there might be no mistake in the person, gave all his titles to the bridegroom elect.

Villefort started, Madame de Villefort let her son slip from her knees, Valentine rose, pale and dumb as a statue. Albert and Château-Renaud exchanged a second look, more full of amazement than the first. The notary looked at Villefort. "It is impossible," said the *procureur du roi*. "M. d'Epinay cannot leave the drawing-room at present."—"It is at this moment," replied Barrois, with the same firmness, "that M. Noirtier, my master, wishes to speak on important subjects to M. Franz d'Epinay."

"Grandpapa Noirtier can speak now, then," said Edward, with his habitual quickness. However, his remark did not make Madame de Villefort even smile, so much was every mind engaged, and so solemn was the situation. Astonishment was at its height. A kind of smile was perceptible on Madame de Villefort's countenance. Valentine instinctively raised her eyes, as if to thank Heaven.

"Pray go, Valentine," said M. de Villefort, "and see what this new fancy of your grandfather's is." Valentine rose quickly, and was hastening joyfully towards the door, when M. de Villefort altered his intention.

"Stop!" said he; "I will go with you."—"Excuse me, sir," said Franz, "since M. Noirtier sent for me, I am ready to attend to his wish; besides, I shall be happy to pay my respects to him, not having yet had the honour of doing so."

"Pray, sir," said Villefort, with marked uneasiness, "do not disturb yourself."—"Forgive me, sir," said Franz, in a resolute tone. "I would not lose this opportunity of proving to M. Noirtier how wrong it would be of him to encourage feelings of dislike to me, which I am determined to conquer, whatever they may be, by my devotedness." And without listening to Villefort he rose, and followed Valentine, who was running down-stairs with the joy of a shipwrecked mariner who finds a rock to cling to. M. de Villefort followed them. Château-Renaud and Mercerf exchanged a third look of still increasing wonder.

CHAPTER LXXV.

PROCES-VERBAL.

NOIRTIER was prepared to receive them, dressed in black, and installed in his arm-chair. When the three persons he expected had entered, he looked at the door, which his valet immediately closed.

"Listen," whispered Villefort to Valentine, who could not conceal her joy; "if M. Noirtier wishes to communicate anything which would delay your marriage, I forbid you to understand him." Valentine blushed, but did not answer. Villefort, approaching Noirtier—"Here is M. Franz

during this scene made the perspiration roll from his forehead, and Franz was stupefied. The old servant came. "Barrois," said Valentine, "my grandfather has told me to open that drawer in the secrétaire, but there is a secret spring in it, which you know—will you open it?"

Barrois looked at the old man. "Obey," said Noirtier's intelligent eye. Barrois touched a spring, the false bottom came out, and they saw a bundle of papers tied with a black string.

"Is that what you wish for?" said Barrois.—"Yes."

"Shall I give these papers to M. de Villefort?"—"No."

"To Mademoiselle Valentine?"—"No."

"To M. Franz d'Epinay?"—"Yes."

Franz, astonished, advanced a step. "To me, sir?" said he.—"Yes." Franz took them from Barrois, and, casting his eye on the cover, read:—

"To be given, after my death, to General Durand, who shall bequeath the packet to his son, with an injunction to preserve it as containing an important document."

"Well, sir," asked Franz, "what do you wish me to do with this paper?"

"To preserve it, sealed up as it is, doubtless," said the procureur du roi.

"No," replied Noirtier, eagerly.

"Do you wish him to read it?" said Valentine.

"Yes," replied the old man. "You understand, baron, my grandfather wishes you to read this paper," said Valentine.

"Then let us sit down," said Villefort, impatiently, "for it will take some time."—"Sit down," said the old man. Villefort took a chair, but Valentine remained standing by her father's side, and Franz before him, holding the mysterious paper in his hand. "Read," said the old man. Franz untied it, and, in the midst of the most profound silence, read:—

"*Extract of the Procès-verbal of a meeting of the Bonapartist Club in the Rue Saint-Jacques, held February 5th, 1815.*"

Franz stopped. "February 5th, 1815!" said he; "it is the day my father was murdered." Valentine and Villefort were dumb; the eye of the old man alone seemed to say clearly, "Go on."—"But it was on leaving this club," said he, "my father disappeared." Noirtier's eye continued to say, "Read." He resumed:—

"The undersigned Louis Jacques Beaurepaire, lieutenant-colonel of artillery, Etienne Duchampy, general of brigade, and Claude Lecharpal, keeper of woods and forests, Declare, that on the 4th of February, a letter arrived from the Isle of Elba, recommending to the kindness and the confidence of the Bonapartist Club, General Flavien de Quesnel, who, having served the emperor from 1804 to 1814, was supposed to be devoted to the interests of the Napoleon dynasty, notwithstanding the title of baron, which Louis XVIII. had just granted to him with his estate of Epinay.

"A note was, in consequence, addressed to General de Quesnel, begging him to be present at the meeting next day, the 5th. The note indicated neither the street nor the number of the house where the meeting was to be held; it bore no signature, but it announced to the general that some one would call for him, if he would be ready at nine o'clock. The meetings were always held from that time till midnight. At nine o'clock, the president of the club presented himself; the general was ready; the president informed him one of the conditions of his introduction was, that he should be eternally ignorant of the place of meeting, and that he would

allow his eyes to be bandaged, swearing that he would not endeavour to take off the bandage. The General de Quesnel accepted the condition, and promised, on his honour, not to seek to discover the road they took. The general's carriage was ready, but the president told him it was impossible he could use it, for it was useless to blindfold the master if the coachman knew through what streets he went. "What must, then, be done?" asked the general.—"I have my carriage here," said the president.

"Have you, then, so much confidence in your servant that you can intrust him with a secret you will not allow me to know?"—"Our coachman is a member of the club," said the president; "we shall be driven by a State-Councillor."—"Then we run another risk," said the general, laughing, "that of being upset." We insert this joke to prove that the general was not in the least compelled to attend this meeting, but that he came willingly. When they were seated in the carriage, the president reminded the general of his promise to allow his eyes to be bandaged, to which he made no opposition. On the road the president thought he saw the general make an attempt to remove the handkerchief, and reminded him of his oath. "True," said the general. The carriage stopped at a passage leading to the Rue Saint-Jacques. The general alighted, leaning on the arm of the president, of whose dignity he was not aware, considering him simply as a member of the club; they crossed the passage, mounted to the first story, and entered the meeting-room.

"The deliberations had already commenced. The members, apprised of the sort of presentation which was to be made that evening, were all in attendance. When in the middle of the room the general was invited to remove his bandage. He did so immediately, and was surprised to see so many well-known faces in a society of whose existence he had till then been ignorant. They questioned him as to his sentiments, but he contented himself with answering, that the letters from the Isle of Elba ought to have informed them——"

Franz interrupted himself by saying, "My father was a royalist; they need not have asked his sentiments, which were well known."—"And hence," said Villefort, "arose my affection for your father, my dear M. Franz. A similarity of opinion soon binds."

"Read again," said the old man. Franz continued:—

"The president then sought to make him speak more explicitly; but M. de Quesnel replied, that he wished first to know what they wanted with him. He was then informed of the contents of the letter from the Isle of Elba, in which he was recommended to the club as a man who would be likely to advance the interests of their party. One paragraph alluded to the return of Bonaparte, and promised another letter, and further details, on the arrival of the *Pharaon*, belonging to the ship-builder Morrel, of Marseilles, whose captain was entirely devoted to the emperor. During all this time, the general, on whom they thought to have relied as on a brother, manifested evidently signs of discontent and repugnance. When the reading was finished, he remained silent, with knit brow.

"Well," asked the president, "what do you say to this letter, general?"—"I say that it is too soon after declaring myself for Louis XVIII. to break my vow in behalf of the ex-emperor." This answer was too clear to be mistaken as to his sentiments. "General," said the president, "we acknowledge no King Louis XVIII., nor an ex-emperor, but his majesty the emperor and king, driven from France, which is his kingdom, by violence and treason."—"Excuse me, gentlemen," said the general;

"you may not acknowledge Louis XVIII., but I do, as he has made me a baron and a field-marshal, and I shall never forget that for these two titles I am indebted to his happy return to France."—"Sir," said the president, rising with gravity, "be careful what you say; your words clearly show us that they are deceived concerning you in the Isle of Elba, and have deceived us! The communication has been made to you in consequence of the confidence placed in you, and which does you honour. Now we discover our error; a title and promotion attach you to the government we wish to overturn. We will not constrain you to help us; we enroll no one against his conscience, but we will compel you to act generously, even if you are not disposed to do so."—"You would call acting generously, knowing your conspiracy and not informing against you; that is what I should call becoming your accomplice. You see I am more candid than you.""

"Ah, my father!" said Franz, interrupting himself. "I understand now why they murdered him." Valentine could not help casting one glance towards the young man, whose filial enthusiasm it was delightful to behold. Villefort walked to and fro behind them. Noirtier watched the expression of each one, and preserved his dignified and commanding attitude. Franz returned to the manuscript, and continued:—

"“Sir,” said the president, “you have been invited to join this assembly—you were not forced here; it was proposed to you to come blindfolded—you accepted. When you complied with this twofold request you well knew we did not wish to secure the throne of Louis XVIII., or we should not take so much care to avoid the vigilance of the police. It would be conceding too much to allow you to put on a mask to aid you in the discovery of our secret, and then to remove it that you may ruin those who have confided in you. No, no, you must first say if you declare yourself for the king of a day who now reigns, or for his majesty the emperor.”—"I am a royalist," replied the general; "I have taken the oath of allegiance to Louis XVIII., and I will adhere to it." These words were followed by a general murmur; and it was evident several of the members were discussing the propriety of making the general repent of his rashness. The president again rose, and having imposed silence, said,—“Sir, you are too serious and too sensible a man not to understand the consequences of our present situation, and your candour has already dictated to us the conditions which remain for us to offer you.” The general, putting his hand on his sword, exclaimed,—“If you talk of honour, do not begin by disavowing its laws, and impose nothing by violence.”—"And you, sir," continued the president, with a calmness still more terrible than the general's anger, "do not touch your sword, I advise you." The general looked around him with slight uneasiness; however, he did not yield, but recalling all his strength,—“I will not swear," said he.—“Then, you must die," replied the president, calmly. M. d'Épinay became very pale; he looked round him a second time, several members of the club were whispering, and getting their arms from under their cloaks. "General," said the president, "do not alarm yourself, you are among men of honour, who will use every means to convince you before resorting to the last extremity; but as you have said, you are among conspirators, you are in possession of our secret, and you must restore it to us." A significant silence followed these words, and as the general did not reply,—“Close the doors," said the president to the door-keeper. The same deadly silence succeeded these words. Then the general advanced, and making a violent effort to control

his feelings,—“I have a son,” said he, “and I ought to think of him, finding myself among assassins.”—“General,” said the chief of the assembly, “one man may insult fifty—it is the privilege of weakness. But he does wrong to use his privilege. Follow my advice, swear, and do not insult.” The general, again daunted by the superiority of the chief, hesitated a moment; then advancing to the president’s desk,—“What is the form?” said he.

“It is this:—‘I swear by my honour not to reveal to any one what I have seen and heard on the 5th of February, 1815, between nine and ten o’clock in the evening; and I plead guilty of death should I ever violate this oath.’” The general appeared to be affected by a nervous shudder, which prevented his answering for some moments; then, overcoming his manifest repugnance, he pronounced the required oath, but in so low a tone as to be scarcely audible to the majority of the members, who insisted on his repeating it clearly and distinctly, which he did.

“Now am I at liberty to retire?” said the general. The president rose, appointed three members to accompany him, and got into the carriage with the general after bandaging his eyes. One of those three members was the coachman who had driven them there. The other members silently dispersed. “Where do you wish to be taken?” asked the president.—“Anywhere out of your presence,” replied M. d’Epinay. “Beware, sir,” replied the president; “you are no longer in the assembly, and have only to do with individuals; do not insult them unless you wish to be held responsible.” But instead of listening, M. d’Epinay went on,—“You are still as brave in your carriage as in your assembly because you are still four against one.” The president stopped the coach. They were at that part of the Quai des Ormes where the steps lead down to the river. “Why do you stop here?” asked d’Epinay.—“Because sir,” said the president, “you have insulted a man, and that man will not go one step

he had said, one he carried in his cane, was five inches shorter than the general's, and had no guard. The general proposed to cast lots for the swords, but the president said it was he who had given the provocation, and when he had given it he had supposed each would use his own arms. The witnesses endeavoured to insist, but the president bade them be silent. The lantern was placed on the ground, the two adversaries arranged themselves, and the duel commenced. The light made the two swords appear like flashes of lightning; as for the men, they were scarce perceptible, the darkness was so great. M. le Général d'Epinay passed for one of the best swordsmen in the army, but he was pressed so closely in the onset that he missed his aim and fell. The witnesses thought he was dead, but his adversary, who knew he had not struck him, offered him the assistance of his hand to rise. The circumstance irritated instead of calming the general, and he rushed on his adversary. But his opponent did not miss one strike. Receiving him on his sword, three times the general drew back, and finding himself foiled, returned to the charge. At the third he fell again. They thought he slipped, as at first, and the witnesses, seeing he did not move, approached and endeavoured to raise him, but the one who passed his arm around the body found it was moistened with blood. The general, who had almost fainted, revived. "Ah!" said he, "they have sent some fencing-master to fight with me." The president, without answering, approached the witness who held the lantern, and raising his sleeve, showed him two wounds he had received in his arm; then opening his coat, and unbuttoning his waistcoat, displayed his side, pierced with a third wound. Still he had not even uttered a sigh. The General d'Epinay died five minutes after."

Franz read these last words in a voice so choked that they were hardly audible, and then stopped, passing his hand over his eyes as if to dispel a cloud; but after a moment's silence, he continued:—

"The president went up the steps, after pushing his sword into his cane; a track of blood on the snow marked his course. He had scarcely arrived at the top when he heard a heavy splash in the water—it was the general's body, which the witnesses had just thrown into the river after ascertaining he was dead. The general fell, then, in a loyal duel, and not in ambush, as it might have been reported. In proof of this, we have signed this paper to establish the truth of the facts, lest the moment should arrive when either of the actors in this terrible scene should be accused of premeditated murder or of infringement of the laws of honour.

"Signed, BEAUREPAIRE, DUCHAMPY, and LECHARPAL."

When Franz had finished reading this account, so dreadful for a son,—when Valentine, pale with emotion, had wiped away a tear,—when Villefort, trembling, and crouched in a corner, had endeavoured to lessen the storm by supplicating glances at the implacable old man,—

"Sir," said d'Epinay to Noirtier, "since you are well acquainted with all these details, which are attested by honourable signatures,—since you appear to take some interest in me, although you have only manifested it hitherto by causing me sorrow, refuse me not one final satisfaction—tell me the name of the president of the club, that I may at least know who killed my father." Villefort mechanically felt for the handle of the door; Valentine, who understood sooner than anyone her grandfather's answer, and who had often seen two scars upon his right arm, drew back a few steps. "Mademoiselle," said Franz, turning towards Valentine, "unite your

efforts with mine to find out the name of the man who made me an orphan at two years of age." Valentine remained dumb and motionless.

"Hold, sir!" said Villefort, "do not prolong this dreadful scene. The names have been purposely concealed; my father himself does not know who this president was, and if he knows, he cannot tell you; proper names are not in the dictionary."

"Oh, misery!" cried Franz; "the only hope which sustained me and enabled me to read to the end was that of knowing, at least, the name of him who killed my father! Sir! sir!" cried he, turning to Noirtier, "do what you can!—make me understand in some way!"—"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"Oh, mademoiselle!—mademoiselle!" cried Franz, "your grandfather says he can indicate the person. Help me!—lend me your assistance!" Noirtier looked at the dictionary. Franz took it with a nervous trembling, and repeated the letters of the alphabet successively, until he came to M. At that letter the old man signified "Yes."—"M." repeated Franz. The young man's finger glided over the words, but at each one Noirtier answered by a negative sign. Valentine hid her head between her hands. At length, Franz arrived at the word MYSELF.—"Yes!"

"You!" cried Franz, whose hair stood on end; "you, M. Noirtier!—you killed my father?"—"Yes?" replied Noirtier, fixing a majestic look on the young man. Franz fell powerless on a chair; Villefort opened the door and escaped, for the idea had entered his mind to stifle the little remaining life in the old man's heart.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

PROGRESS OF M. CAVALCANTI THE YOUNGER.

since the dinner at Auteuil, and the events which followed it, that Madame Danglars heard Monte-Cristo's name announced. If he did not come, the painful sensation became most intense; if, on the contrary, he appeared, his noble countenance, his brilliant eyes, his amiability, his polite attention even towards Madame Danglars, soon dispelled every impression of fear. It appeared impossible to the baroness that a man of such delightfully pleasing manners should entertain evil designs against her; besides, the most corrupt minds only suspect evil when it would answer some interested end—useless injury is repugnant to every mind. When Monte-Cristo entered the boudoir, to which we have already once introduced our readers, and where the baroness was examining some drawings, which her daughter passed to her after having looked at them with M. Cavalcanti, his presence soon produced its usual effect; and it was with smiles that the baroness received the count, although she had been a little disconcerted at the announcement of his name. The latter embraced the whole scene at a glance.

The baroness was partially reclining on a *causeuse*, Eugénie sat near her, and Cavalcanti was standing. Cavalcanti, dressed in black, like one of Goethe's heroes, with japanned shoes and open white silk stockings, passed a white and tolerably nice-looking hand through his light hair, in the midst of which sparkled a diamond, which, in spite of Monte-Cristo's advice, the vain young man had been unable to resist putting on his little finger. This movement was accompanied by killing glances at Mademoiselle Danglars, and sighs addressed to the same party. Mademoiselle Danglars was still the same—cold, beautiful, and satirical. Not one of these glances, nor one sigh, was lost on her; they might have been said to fall on the shield of Minerva, which some philosophers assert protected sometimes the breast of Sappho. Eugénie bowed coldly to the count, and availed herself of the first moment when the conversation became earnest to escape to her study, whence very soon two cheerful and noisy voices being heard, in connexion with some notes of the piano, assured Monte-Cristo that Mademoiselle Danglars preferred to his society and to that of M. Cavalcanti the company of Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly, her singing governess.

It was then, especially while conversing with Madame Danglars, and apparently absorbed by the charm of the conversation, the count remarked M. Andrea Cavalcanti's solicitude, his manner of listening to the music at the door he dared not pass, and of manifesting his admiration. The banker soon returned. His first look was certainly directed towards Monte-Cristo, but the second was for Andrea. As for his wife, he bowed to her, as some husbands do to their wives, but which bachelors will never comprehend, until a very extensive code is published on conjugal life.

"Have not the ladies invited you to join them at the piano?" said Danglars to Andrea. "Alas! no, sir," replied Andrea, with a sigh, still more remarkable than the former ones. Danglars immediately advanced towards the door and opened it.

The two young ladies were seen seated on the same chair, at the piano, accompanying themselves, each with one hand, a fancy to which they had accustomed themselves, and performed admirably. Mademoiselle d'Armilly, whom they then perceived through the open doorway, formed with Eugénie one of those living pictures of which the Germans are so fond. She was somewhat beautiful, and exquisitely genteel—a little fairy-like figure, with large curls falling on her neck, which was rather too long, as Perugino sometimes makes his Virgins, and her eyes dull from fatigue.

This was followed by rather an awkward silence. "May I also be allowed," said Morcerf, "to pay my respects to Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Wait a moment," said the banker, stopping the young man; "do you hear that delightful cavatina? Ta, ta, ta, ti, ta, ti, ta; it is charming, let them finish—one moment. Bravo! bravi! brava!" The banker was enthusiastic in his applause.

"Indeed," said Albert, "it is exquisite; it is impossible to understand the music of his country better than Prince Cavalcanti does. You said prince, did you not? But he can easily become one, if he is not already; it is no uncommon thing in Italy. But to return to the charming musicians—you should give us a treat, Danglars, without telling them there is a stranger. Ask them to sing one more song; it is so delightful to hear music in the distance, when the musicians are unrestrained by observation."

Danglars was quite annoyed by the young man's indifference. He took Monte-Cristo aside. "What do you think of our lover?" said he.

"He appears cool! But, then, your word is given."—"Yes, doubtless, I have promised to give my daughter to a man who loves her, but not to one who does not. Even if Albert had Cavalcanti's fortune, he is so proud, I would not care to see him marry her."

"Oh!" said Monte-Cristo, "my fondness may blind me, but, I assure you, I consider Morcerf far preferable; and his father's position is good."

"Hem!" said Danglars. "Why do you doubt?"

"The past—that obscurity on the past."—"But that does not affect the son. A month since you thought well of him; and I know nothing of young Cavalcanti, although you met him at my house."

"But I do."—"Have you made inquiry?"

"Yes; and I know him to be rich."—"What do you suppose him worth?"—"Fifty thousand per annum; and he is well educated."

"Hem?" said Monte-Cristo in his turn.

The baroness took advantage of her husband's absence to push open the door of her daughter's study, and M. Andrea, who was sitting before the piano with Mademoiselle Eugénie, started up like a spring. Albert bowed to Mademoiselle Danglars with a smile, who, not appearing in the least disturbed, returned his bow with her usual coolness. Cavalcanti was evidently embarrassed ; he bowed to Morcerf, who replied with the most impertinent look possible. Then Albert launched out in praise of Mademoiselle Danglars' voice, and on his regret, after what he had just heard, he had been unable to be present the previous evening.

Cavalcanti being left alone, turned to Monte-Cristo.

"Come," said Madame Danglars, "leave music and compliments, and let us go and take tea."—"Come, Louise," said Mademoiselle Danglars to her friend. They passed into the next drawing-room, where tea was prepared. Just as they were beginning, in the English fashion, to leave the spoons in their cups, the door again opened, and Danglars entered, visibly agitated. Monte-Cristo observed it particularly, and, by a look asked the banker for an explanation. "I have just received my courier from Greece," said Danglars.

"Ah ! ah !" said the count ; "that was the reason of your running away from us."—"Yes."

"How is King Otho?" asked Albert, in the most sprightly tone. Danglars cast another suspicious look towards him without answering, and Monte-Cristo turned away to conceal the expression of pity which passed over his features, but which was gone in a moment. "We shall go together, shall we not?" said Albert to the count.

"If you like," replied the latter. Albert could not understand the banker's look, and turning to Monte-Cristo, who understood it perfectly,—

"Did you see," said he, "how he looked at me?"—"Yes," said the count ; "but did you think there was anything particular in his look?"

—"Indeed, I did ; and what does he mean by his news from Greece?"

—"How can I tell you?"

"Because I imagine you have correspondents in that country." Monte-Cristo smiled significantly. "Stop," said Albert, "here he comes. I shall compliment Mademoiselle Danglars on her cameo, while the father talks to you."

"If you compliment her at all, let it be on her voice, at least," said Monte-Cristo.—"No, every one would do that."

"My dear viscount, you are dreadfully impertinent." Albert advanced towards Eugénie, smiling. Meanwhile, Danglars, stooping to Monte-Cristo's ear, "Your advice was excellent," said he ; "there is a whole history connected with the names Fernand and Janina."

"Indeed !" said Monte-Cristo. "Yes, I will tell you all ; but take away the young man ; I cannot endure his presence."

"He is going with me. Shall I send the father to you?"

"Immediately."—"Very well." The count made a sign to Albert ; they bowed to the ladies, and took their leave ; Albert perfectly indifferent to Mademoiselle Danglars' contempt, Monte-Cristo reiterating his advice to Madame Danglars on the prudence a banker's wife should exercise in providing for the future. M. Cavalcanti remained master of the field.

I should like to hear my countrywomen called Mademoiselle Goodness, Mademoiselle Silence, Mademoiselle Christian Charity ! Only think, then, if Mademoiselle Danglars, instead of being called Claire-Marie-Eugénie, had been named Mademoiselle Chastity-Modesty-Innocence Danglars ; what a fine effect that would have produced on the announcement of her marriage !”

“ Silence !” said the count, “ do not joke in so loud a tone ; Haydée may hear you, perhaps.”——“ And you think she would be angry ?”

“ No, certainly not,” said the count, with a haughty expression.

“ She is very amiable, then, is she not ?” said Albert.

“ It is not to be called amiability, it is her duty ; a slave does not dictate to a master.”——“ Come ; you are joking yourself now ; are there any more slaves to be had who bear this beautiful name ?”

“ Undoubtedly.”——“ Really, count, you do nothing, and have nothing like other people. The slave of M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo ! why, it is a rank of itself in France : and from the way in which you lavish money, it is a place that must be worth a hundred thousand francs a-year.”——“ A hundred thousand francs ! the poor girl originally possessed much more than that ; she was born to treasures, in comparison with which those recorded in the ‘ Thousand and One Nights ’ would seem but poverty.”——“ She must be a princess, then ?”

“ You are right ; and she is one of the greatest in her country, too !”

“ I thought so. But how did it happen that such a great princess became a slave ?”

“ How was it that Dionysius the Tyrant became a schoolmaster ? The fortune of war, my dear viscount,—the caprice of fortune ; that is the way in which these things are to be accounted for.”

“ And is her name a secret ?”——“ As regards the generality of mankind it is ; but not for you, my dear viscount, who are one of my most intimate friends, and on whose silence I feel I may rely, if I consider it necessary to enjoin it : may I not do so ?”

“ Certainly ! on my word of honour.”

“ You know the history of the pacha of Yanina, do you not ?”

“ Of Ali Tebelen ! oh ! yes ! it was in his service that my father made his fortune.”——“ True, I had forgotten that.”

“ Well ! what is Haydée to Ali Tebelen ?”——“ Merely his daughter.”

“ What ? the daughter of Ali Pacha ?”

“ Of Ali Pacha and the beautiful Vasiliki.”

“ And your slave ?”——“ *Ma foi !* yes.”

“ But how did she become so ?”——“ Why, simply from the circumstance of my having bought her one day, as I was passing through the market at Constantinople.”

“ Wonderful ! really, my dear count, you seem to throw a sort of magic influence over all in which you are concerned ; when listening to you, existence no longer seems reality, but a waking dream. Now, I am perhaps going to make an imprudent and thoughtless request, but——”

“ Say on.”——“ But, since you go out with Haydée, and sometimes even take her to the Opera——”

“ Well ?”——“ I think I may venture to ask you this favour.”

“ You may venture to ask me anything.”

“ Well, then, my dear count, present me to your princess.”

“ I will do so ; but on two conditions.”

“ I accept them at once.”——“ The first is, that you will never tell any one that I have granted the interview.”

well," said Albert, extending his hand ; " I swear I will not." second is, that you will not tell her that your father ever served

you my oath that I will not."—" Enough, viscount ; you will rehearse those two vows, will you not ? But I know you to be a man of

The count again struck the gong. Ali reappeared. " Tell," said he, " that I will take coffee with her, and give her to understand that I desire permission to present one of my friends to her." and left the room. " Now, understand me," said the count, " no questions, my dear Morcerf ; if you wish to know anything, tell me, I ask her."—" Agreed." Ali reappeared for the third time, and took the tapestried hanging which concealed the door, to signify to her and Albert that they were at liberty to pass on. " Let us go Monte-Cristo.

He passed his hand through his hair, and curled his moustache, being satisfied himself as to his personal appearance, followed her to the room, the latter having previously resumed his hat and Ali was stationed as a kind of advanced guard, and the door was opened by the three French *femmes-de-chambre*, commanded by Myrtho. She was awaiting her visitors in the first room of her suite of apartments which was the drawing-room. Her large eyes were dilated with interest and expectation, for it was the first time that any man, except Monte-Cristo, had been accorded an entrance into her presence. She was sitting on a sofa placed in an angle of the room, with her legs crossed under her in the Eastern fashion, and seemed to have made herself, as it were, a kind of nest in the rich Indian silks which surrounded her. Near her was the instrument on which she had just been playing ; it was elegantly fashioned, and worthy of its mistress. Receiving Monte-Cristo, she rose and welcomed him with a kind of peculiar to herself, expressive at once of the most implicit confidence and also of the deepest love. Monte-Cristo advanced towards her, extended his hand, which she, as usual, raised to her lips.

He had proceeded no farther than the door, where he remained for a moment, being completely fascinated by the sight of such surpassing beauty, beheld, as it was, for the first time, and of which an acquaintance from any of the more northern climes could form no adequate idea.

" How do you bring ?" asked the young girl, in Romanic, of Monte-Cristo. " Is it a friend, a brother, a simple acquaintance, or an enemy ?" " Friend," said Monte-Cristo, in the same language.

" What is his name ?"—" Count Albert ; it is the same man whom I rescued from the hands of the banditti at Rome."

" What language would you like me to converse with him ?"

Monte-Cristo turned to Albert. " Do you know modern Greek," asked he. " Alas ! no," said Albert ; " nor even ancient Greek, my dear

never had Homer or Plato a more unworthy scholar than myself." Then," said Haydée, proving by her remark that she had quite understood Monte-Cristo's question and Albert's answer, " then I will converse with you either in French or Italian, if my lord so wills it."

Monte-Cristo reflected one instant. " You will speak in Italian," said he, then, turning towards Albert,— " It is a pity you do not understand ancient or modern Greek, both of which Haydée speaks fluently ; or your child will be obliged to talk to you in Italian, which gives you a very false idea of her powers of conversation." Haydée made a sign to Albert to address his visitor. " Sir," said

awoke by my mother. We were in the palace of Yanina ; she snatched me from the cushions on which I was sleeping, and on opening my eyes I saw hers were filled with tears. She took me away without speaking. When I saw her weeping I began to cry too. ' Silence, child ! ' said she. At other times, in spite of maternal endearments or threats, I had, with a child's caprice, been accustomed to indulge my feelings of sorrow or anger by crying as much as I felt inclined ; but on this occasion there was an intonation of such extreme terror in my mother's voice when she enjoined me to silence, that I ceased crying as soon as her command was given. She bore me rapidly away. I saw then that we were descending a large staircase ; around us were all my mother's servants carrying trunks, bags, ornaments, jewels, purses of gold, &c., &c., with which they were hurrying away in the greatest distraction. Behind the women came a guard of twenty men, armed with long guns and pistols, and dressed in the costume which the Greeks have assumed since they have again become a nation. You may imagine there was something startling and ominous," said Haydée, shaking her head, and turning pale at the mere remembrance of the scene, " in this long file of slaves and women only half-aroused from sleep, or at least, so they appeared to me, who was myself scarcely awake. Here and there, on the walls of the staircase, were reflected gigantic shadows, which trembled in the flickering light of the pine-torches, till they seemed to reach to the vaulted roof above.

" ' Quick ! ' said a voice at the end of the gallery. This voice made every one bow before it, resembling in its effect the wind passing over a field of corn, by its superior strength forcing every ear to yield obeisance. As for me, it made me tremble. This voice was that of my father. He marched the last, clothed in his splendid robes, and holding in his hand the carbine with which your emperor presented him. He was leaning on the shoulder of his favourite Selim, and he drew us all before him.

bark flew before the wind. 'Why does the boat go so fast?' asked I of my mother.

"'Silence, child! Hush! we are flying.' I did not understand. Why should my father fly?—he, the all-powerful—he, before whom others were accustomed to fly—he, who had taken for his device—

'THEY HATE ME, THEN THEY FEAR ME!'

"It was, indeed, a flight which my father was trying to effect. I have been told since, that the garrison of the castle of Yanina, fatigued with long service——"

Here Haydée cast a significant glance at Monte-Cristo, whose eyes had been riveted on her countenance during the whole course of her narrative. The young girl then continued, speaking slowly, like a person who is either inventing or suppressing some feature of the history which he is relating. "You were saying, signora," said Albert, who was paying the most implicit attention to the recital, "that the garrison of Yanina, fatigued with long service——"

"Had treated with the Seraskier Kourchid, who had been sent by the sultan to gain possession of the person of my father; it was then that Ali Tebelen took the resolution of retiring, after having sent to the sultan a French officer in whom he reposed great confidence, to the asylum which he had long before prepared for himself, and which he called *kataphygion*, or the refuge."—"And this officer," asked Albert, "do you remember his name, signora?" Monte-Cristo exchanged a rapid glance with the young girl, which was quite unperceived by Albert. "No," said she, "I do not remember it just at this moment; but if it should occur to me presently, I will tell you." Albert was on the point of pronouncing his father's name, when Monte-Cristo gently held up his finger in token of reproach; the young man recollected his vow, and was silent.

"It was towards this kiosk that we were rowing. A ground-floor, ornamented with arabesques, bathing its terraces in the water, and another floor, looking on the lake, was all which was visible to the eye. But beneath the ground-floor, stretching out into the island, was a large subterranean cavern, to which my mother, myself, and the women were conducted. In this place were together 60,000 purses and 200 barrels; the purses contained 25,000,000 of money in gold, and the barrels were filled with 30,000 pounds of gunpowder.

"Near these barrels stood Selim, my father's favourite, whom I mentioned to you just now. It was his duty to watch day and night a lance, at the end of which was a lighted match, and he had orders to blow up all—kiosk, guards, women, gold, and Ali Tebelen himself, at the first signal given by my father. I remember well that the slaves, convinced of the precarious tenure on which they held their lives, passed whole days and nights in praying, crying, and groaning. As for me, I can never forget the pale complexion and black eye of the young soldier; and whenever the angel of death summons me to another world, I am quite sure I shall recognise Selim. I cannot tell you how long we remained in this state; at that period I did not even know what time meant; sometimes, but very rarely, my father summoned me and my mother to the terrace of the palace; these were my hours of recreation; I, who never saw anything in the dismal cavern but the gloomy countenances of the slaves and the fiery lance of Selim. My father was endeavouring to pierce with his eager looks the remotest verge of the horizon, examining attentively every black speck which appeared on the lake, whilst my mother, reclining by his side, rested her

head on his shoulder, and I played at his feet, admiring everything I saw with that unsophisticated innocence of childhood which throws a charm round objects insignificant in themselves, but which in its eyes are invested with the greatest importance. The heights of Pindus towered above us; the castle of Yanina rose white and angular from the blue waters of the lake, and the immense masses of black vegetation which, viewed in the distance, gave the idea of lichens clinging to the rocks, were, in reality, gigantic fir-trees and myrtles.

"One morning my father sent for us; my mother had been crying all the night, and was very wretched; we found the pacha calm, but paler than usual. 'Take courage, Vasiliki,' said he; 'to-day arrives the firman of the master, and my fate will be decided. If my pardon be complete, we shall return triumphant to Yanina; if the news be inauspicious, we must fly this night.'—'But supposing our enemy should not allow us to do so?' said my mother. 'Oh! make yourself easy on that head,' said Ali, smiling; 'Selim and his flaming lance will settle that matter. They would be glad to see me dead, but they would not like themselves to die with me.'

"My mother only answered by sighs to these consolations, which she knew did not come from my father's heart. She prepared the iced water which he was in the habit of constantly drinking, for, since his sojourn at the kiosk, he had been parched by the most violent fever, after which she anointed his white beard with perfumed oil, and lighted his chibouque, which he sometimes smoked for hours together, quietly watching the wreaths of vapour, which, ascending in spiral clouds, gradually mixed itself with the surrounding atmosphere. Presently he made such a sudden movement, that I was paralyzed with fear. Then, without taking his eyes from the object which had first attracted his attention, he asked for his telescope. My mother gave it him; and as she did so, looked whiter than the marble against which she leaned. I saw my father's hand tremble. 'A boat!—two!—three!' murmured my father;—'four!' He then rose, seizing his arms and priming his pistols. 'Vasiliki,' said he to my mother, trembling perceptibly, 'the instant approaches which will decide everything. In the space of half-an-hour we shall know the emperor's answer. Go into the cavern with Haydée.'—'I will not quit you,' said Vasiliki; 'if you die, my lord, I will die with you.'—'Go to Selim!' cried my father. 'Adieu! my lord,' murmured my mother, determining quietly to await the approach of death. 'Take away Vasiliki!' said my father to his Palicares.

"As for me, I had been forgotten in the general confusion; I ran towards Ali Tebelen; he saw me hold out my arms to him, and he stooped down and pressed my forehead with his lips. Oh! how distinctly I remember that kiss! it was the last he ever gave me, and I feel as if it were still warm on my forehead. On descending, we distinguished through the lattice-work several boats which were gradually becoming more distinct to our view. At first they appeared like black specks, and now they looked like birds skimming the surface of the waves. During this time, in the kiosk, at the feet of my father, were seated twenty Palicares, concealed from view by an angle of the wall, and watching with eager eyes the arrival of the boats; they were armed with their long guns inlaid with mother-of-pearl and silver, and cartouches, in great numbers, were lying scattered on the floor; my father looked at his watch, and paced up and down with a countenance expressive of the greatest anguish. This was the scene which presented itself to my view when I quitted my father after that last kiss. My mother and I traversed the gloomy passage leading to the cavern. Selim was still at his post, and smiled sadly on us as

we entered. We fetched our cushions from the other end of the cavern, and sat down by Selim. In great dangers the devoted ones cling to each other ; and, young as I was, I quite understood that some imminent danger was hanging over our heads."

Albert had often heard, not from his father, for he never spoke on the subject, but from strangers, the description of the last moments of the vizier of Yanina ; he had read different accounts of his death, but this history seemed to borrow new life from the voice and expression of the young girl : the living accent and the melancholy expression of countenance at once charmed and horrified him. As to Haydée, these terrible reminiscences seemed to have overpowered her for the moment, for she ceased speaking, her head leaning on her hand like a beautiful flower bowing beneath the violence of the storm, and her eyes, gazing on vacancy, indicated that she was mentally contemplating the green summit of the Pindus and the blue waters of the lake of Yanina, which, like a magic mirror, seemed to reflect the sombre picture which she sketched. Monte-Cristo looked at her with an indescribable expression of interest and pity.

"Go on," said the count, in the Romaic language.

Haydée looked up abruptly, as if the sonorous tones of Monte-Cristo's voice had awakened her from a dream, and she resumed her narrative. "It was about four o'clock in the afternoon ; and although the day was brilliant out of doors, we were enveloped in the gloomy darkness of the cavern. One single solitary light was burning there, and it appeared like a star set in a heaven of blackness ; it was Selim's flaming lance. My mother was a Christian, and she prayed. Selim repeated from time to time these sacred words :—'God is great !' However, my mother had still some hope. As she was coming down, she thought she recognised the French officer who had been sent to Constantinople, and in whom my father placed so much confidence, for he knew that all the soldiers of the French emperor were naturally noble and generous. She advanced some steps towards the staircase, and listened. 'They are approaching,' said she ; 'perhaps they bring us peace and liberty !'—'What do you fear, Vasiliki ?' said Selim, in a voice at once so gentle and yet so proud ; 'if they do not bring us peace we will give them war ; if they do not bring life we will give them death.' And he renewed the flame of his lance with an alacrity which reminded one of the Dionysian festivals among the ancient Cretans. But I, who was only a little child, was terrified by this undaunted courage, which appeared to me both ferocious and senseless, and I recoiled with horror from the idea of the frightful death amidst fire and flame which probably awaited us.

"My mother experienced the same sensations, for I felt her tremble. 'Mamma, mamma,' said I, 'are we really to be killed ?' And at the sound of my voice the slaves redoubled their cries, and prayers, and lamentations. 'My child,' said Vasiliki, 'may God preserve you from ever wishing for that death which to-day you so much dread !' Then, whispering to Selim, she asked what were his master's orders. 'If he send me his poniard, it will signify that the emperor's intentions are not favourable, and I am to set fire to the powder ; if, on the contrary, he send me his ring, it will be a sign that the emperor pardons him, and I will extinguish the match and leave the magazine untouched.'—'My friend,' said my mother, 'when your master's order arrives, if it is the poniard which he sends, instead of despatching us by that horrible death which we both so much dread, you will mercifully kill us with this same poniard, will you not ?'—'Yes, Vasiliki,' replied Selim, tranquilly.

"Suddenly we heard loud cries ; we listened : they were cries of joy ; the name of the French officer who had been sent to Constantinople resounded on all sides amongst our Palicares ; it was evident that he brought the answer of the emperor, and that it was favourable."

"And do you not remember the Frenchman's name?" said Morcerf, quite ready to aid the memory of the narrator. Monte-Cristo made a sign to him to be silent.—"I do not recollect it," said Haydée.

"The noise increased, steps were heard approaching nearer and nearer ; they were descending the steps leading to the cavern. Selim made ready his lance. Soon a figure appeared in the grey twilight at the entrance of the cave, formed by the reflection of the few rays of daylight which had found their way into this gloomy retreat. 'Who are you?' cried Selim. 'But whoever you may be, I charge you not to advance another step.'—'Long live the emperor!' said the figure. 'He grants a full pardon to the Vizier Ali ; and not only gives him his life, but restores to him his fortune and his possessions.' My mother uttered a cry of joy, and clasped me to her bosom. 'Stop!' said Selim, seeing that she was about to go out ; 'you see I have not yet received the ring.'—'True,' said my mother. And she fell on her knees, at the same time holding me up towards heaven, as if she desired, whilst praying to God in my behalf, to raise me actually to his presence."

And for the second time Haydée stopped, overcome by such violent emotion that the perspiration stood upon her pale brow, and her stifled voice seemed hardly able to find utterance, so parched and dry were her throat and lips. Monte-Cristo poured a little iced water into a glass, and presented it to her, saying, with a mildness in which was also a shade of command,—"*Courage.*" Haydée dried her eyes, and continued :—"By this time our eyes, habituated to the darkness, had recognised the mes-

the cavern to discover if there was any fear of fire, after which they amused themselves by rolling on the bags of gold. At this moment my mother seized me in her arms, and bounding lightly along numerous turnings and windings, known only to ourselves, she arrived at a private staircase of the kiosk, where was a scene of frightful tumult and confusion. The lower rooms were entirely filled with the *tchodoars* of Kourchid, that is to say, with our enemies. Just as my mother was on the point of pushing open a small door, we heard the voice of the pacha sounding in a loud and threatening tone. My mother applied her eye to the crack between the boards; I luckily found a small opening, which afforded me a view of the apartment and what was passing within. 'What do you want?' said my father to some people who were holding a paper inscribed with characters of gold. 'What we want,' replied one of them, 'is to communicate to you the will of his highness. Do you see this firman?'—'I do,' said my father. 'Well, read it; he demands your head.'

"My father answered with a loud laugh, which was more frightful than even threats would have been, and he had not ceased when two reports of a pistol were heard; he had fired them himself, and had killed two men. The *Palicares*, who were prostrated at my father's feet, now sprang up and fired; and the room was filled with fire and smoke. At the same instant the firing began on the other side, and the balls penetrated the boards all round us. Oh! how noble did the grand vizier, my father, look at that moment, in the midst of the balls, his scimitar in his hand, and his face blackened with the powder of his enemies! and how he terrified them, even then, and made them fly before him! 'Selim! Selim!' cried he, 'guardian of the fire, do your duty!'—'Selim is dead!' replied a voice which seemed to come from the depths of the earth, 'and you are lost, Ali!' At the same moment an explosion was heard, and the flooring of the room in which my father was sitting was suddenly torn up and shivered to atoms; the *tchodoars* were firing underneath; three or four *Palicares* fell with their bodies literally ploughed with wounds.

"My father howled aloud, he plunged his fingers into the holes which the balls had made, and tore up one of the planks entire. But immediately through this opening twenty more shots were fired, and the flame, rushing up like fire from the crater of a volcano, soon gained the tapestry, which it quickly devoured. In the midst of all this frightful tumult and these terrific cries, two reports, fearfully distinct, followed by two shrieks more heartrending than all, froze me with terror; these two shots had mortally wounded my father, and it was he who had given utterance to these frightful cries. However, he remained standing, clinging to a window. My mother tried to force the door, that she might go and die with him, but it was fastened on the inside. All around him were lying the *Palicares*, writhing in convulsive agonies; whilst two or three, who were only slightly wounded, were trying to escape by springing from the windows. At this crisis the whole flooring suddenly gave way; my father fell on one knee, and at the same moment twenty hands were thrust forth, armed with sabres, pistols, and poniards—twenty blows were instantaneously directed against one man, and my father disappeared in a whirlwind of fire and smoke kindled by these demons, and which seemed like hell itself opening beneath his feet. I felt myself fall to the ground; it was my mother who had fainted."

Haydée's arms fell by her side, and she uttered a deep groan, at the same time looking towards the count, as if to ask if he were satisfied with her obedience to his commands. Monte-Cristo rose and approached

then re-enter with Albert and Château-Renaud. He had no longer any doubts as to the nature of the conference : he therefore quickly resumed his original position, prepared to hear the result of the proceedings, and very certain that Valentine would hasten to him the first moment she should be set at liberty. He was not mistaken ; his eye, which was peering through the crevices of the wooden partition, soon discovered the young girl, who, throwing aside all her usual precautions, walked at once to the gate. The first glance which Maximilian directed towards her entirely reassured him, and the first words she pronounced made his heart bound with delight.

"We are saved !" said Valentine. "Saved !" repeated Morrel, not being able to conceive such intense happiness ; "by whom ?"—"By my grandfather. Oh, Morrel ! pray love him for all his goodness to us !" Morrel swore to love him with all his soul ; and at that moment he could safely promise to do so, for he felt as though it were not enough to love him merely as a friend or even as a father. "But tell me, Valentine, how has it all been effected ? what strange means has he used to compass this blessed end ?"

Valentine was on the point of relating all that had passed, but she suddenly remembered that in doing so she must reveal a terrible secret which concerned others as well as her grandfather, and she said,—"At some future time I will tell you all about it."

"But when will that be ?"—"When I am your wife."

The conversation had now turned upon a topic so pleasing to Morrel, that he was ready to accede to anything that Valentine thought fit to propose ; and he likewise felt that a piece of intelligence such as he just heard, ought to be more than sufficient to content him for one day. However, he would not leave without the promise of seeing Valentine again the

"In that case, sir," rejoined Madame de Villefort, "I will leave you overwhelmed with gratitude and happiness at your prompt acquiescence to my wishes." She then bowed to M. Noirtier and retired. The next day M. Noirtier sent for the notary ; the first will was torn up and a second made, in which he left the whole of his fortune to Valentine, on condition that she should never be separated from him. It was then generally reported that Mademoiselle de Villefort, the heiress of the marquis and marchioness de Saint-Méran, had regained the good graces of her grandfather, and that she would ultimately be in possession of an income of 300,000 livres. Whilst all the proceedings relative to the dissolution of the marriage-contract were being carried on at the house of M. de Villefort, Monte-Cristo had paid his visit to the count de Morcerf, who, in order to lose no time in responding to M. Danglars' wishes, and at the same time to pay all due deference to his position in society, donned his uniform of lieutenant-general, which he ornamented with all his crosses, and, thus attired, ordered his finest horses and drove to the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Danglars was balancing his monthly accounts, and it was, perhaps, not the most favourable moment for finding him in his best humour. At the first sight of his old friend, Danglars assumed his majestic air and settled himself in his easy chair. Morcerf, usually so stiff and formal, accosted the banker in an affable and smiling manner, and feeling sure that the overture he was about to make would be well received, he did not consider it necessary to adopt any manœuvres in order to gain his end, but went at once straight to the point.

"Well, baron," said he, "here I am at last ; some time has elapsed since our plans were formed, and they are not yet executed." Morcerf paused at these words, quietly waiting till the cloud should have dispersed which had gathered on the brow of Danglars, and which he attributed to his silence ; but, on the contrary, to his great surprise, it grew darker and darker. "To what do you allude, M. le Comte?" said Danglars ; as if he was trying in vain to guess at the possible meaning of the general's words.

"Ah !" said Morcerf ; "I see you are a stickler for forms, my dear sir, and you would remind me that the ceremonial rites should not be omitted. *Ma foi !* I beg your pardon, but as I have but one son, and it is the first time I have ever thought of marrying him, I am still serving my apprenticeship, you know ; come, I will reform." And Morcerf, with a forced smile, rose, and, making a low bow to M. Danglars, said : "M. le Baron, I have the honour of asking of you the hand of Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars for my son, Viscount Albert de Morcerf."

But Danglars, instead of receiving this address in the favourable manner which Morcerf had expected, knit his brow, and without inviting the count, who was still standing, to take a seat, he said : "M. le Comte, it will be necessary to reflect before I give you an answer."

"To reflect !" said M. Morcerf, more and more astonished ; "have you not had enough time for reflection during the eight years which have elapsed since this marriage was first discussed between us?"—"M. le Comte," said the banker, "things are constantly occurring in the world to induce us to lay aside our most established opinions, or, at all events, to cause us to remodel them according to the change of circumstances, which may have placed affairs in a totally different light to that in which we at first viewed them."

"I do not understand you, M. le Baron," said Morcerf.

"What I mean to say is this, sir : that during the last fortnight unforeseen circumstances have occurred——"

"Excuse me," said Morcerf; "but is it a play we are acting?"

"A play?"—"Yes, for it is like one; pray let us come more to the point, and endeavour thoroughly to understand each other."

"That is quite my desire."

"You have seen M. de Monte-Cristo, have you not?"—"I see him very often," said Danglars, drawing himself up; "he is a particular friend of mine."

"Well, in one of your late conversations with him, you said that I appeared to be forgetful and irresolute concerning this marriage: did you not?"—"I did say so."

"Well, here I am, proving at once that I am really neither the one nor the other, by entreating you to keep your promise on that score."

Danglars did not answer. "Have you so soon changed your mind," added Morcerf, "or have you only provoked my request that you may have the pleasure of seeing me humbled?" Danglars, seeing that if he continued the conversation in the same tone in which he had begun it, the whole thing might turn out to his own disadvantage, turned to Morcerf, and said: "M. le Comte, you must doubtless be surprised at my reserve; and I assure you it cost me much to act in such a manner towards you; but, believe me when I say that imperative necessity has imposed the painful task upon me."

"These are all so many empty words, my dear sir," said Morcerf; "they might satisfy a new acquaintance, but the count de Morcerf does not rank in that list; and when a man like him comes to another, recalls to him his pledged word, and this man fails to redeem the pledge, he has, at least, a right to exact from him a good reason for so doing." Danglars was a coward, but did not wish to appear so; he was piqued at the tone which Morcerf had just assumed. "I am not without a good reason for

towards whom do you bear this personal ill-feeling, then?" said Morcerf, turning pale with anger. The expression of the count's face had not remained unperceived by the banker; he fixed on him a look of greater assurance than before, and said: "You may, perhaps, be better satisfied that I should not go farther into particulars."

A trembling, caused by suppressed rage, shook the whole frame of the count, and making a violent effort over himself, he said: "I have a right to insist on your giving me an explanation. Is it Madame de Morcerf who has displeased you? is it my fortune which you find insufficient? is it because my opinions differ from yours?"

"Nothing of the kind, sir," replied Danglars: "if such had been the case, I only should have been to blame, inasmuch as I was aware of all these things when I made the engagement. No, do not seek any longer to discover the reason. I really am quite ashamed to have been the cause of your undergoing such severe self-examination; let us drop the subject, and adopt the middle course, namely, delay, which implies neither a rupture nor an engagement. *Ma foi!* there is no hurry. My daughter is only seventeen years old, and your son twenty-one. Whilst we wait, time will be progressing, events will succeed each other; things which in the evening look dark and obscure, appear but too clearly in the light of morning, and sometimes the utterance of one word, or the lapse of a single day, will reveal the most cruel calumnies."

"Calumnies, did you say, sir?" cried Morcerf, turning livid with rage. "Does any one dare to slander me?"—"M. le Comte, I told you that I considered it best to avoid all explanation."

"Then, sir, I am patiently to submit to your refusal?"

"Yes, sir, although I assure you the refusal is as painful for me to give, as it is for you to receive, for I had reckoned on the honour of your alliance, and the breaking off of a marriage-contract always injures the lady more than the gentleman."—"Enough, sir," said Morcerf, "we will speak no more on the subject." And clenching his gloves with passion, he left the apartment. Danglars remarked that during the whole conversation Morcerf had never once dared to ask if it was on his own account that Danglars recalled his word. That evening there was a long conference between several friends, and M. Cavalcanti, who had remained in the drawing-room with the ladies, was the last to leave the house of the banker.

The next morning, directly he awoke, Danglars asked for the newspapers; they were brought to him; he laid aside three or four, and at last fixed on *l'Impartial*: it was the paper of which Beauchamp was the chief editor. He hastily tore off the cover, opened the journal with nervous precipitation, passed contemptuously over *le premier Paris*, and arriving at the miscellaneous intelligence, stopped, with a malicious smile, at a paragraph headed "YANINA." "Very good!" observed Danglars, after having read the paragraph; "here is a little article on Colonel Fernand, which, if I am not mistaken, would render the explanation which the count de Morcerf required of me perfectly unnecessary."

At the same moment, that is, at nine o'clock in the morning, Albert de Morcerf, dressed in a black coat buttoned up to his chin, might have been seen walking with a quick and agitated step in the direction of Monte-Cristo's house in the Champs Elysées. When he presented himself at the gate the porter informed him that the count had gone out about half an hour previously. "Did he take Baptistin with him?"

"No, M. le Vicomte."

"Call him, then ; I wish to speak to him." The concierge went to seek the valet-de-chambre, and returned with him in an instant.

"My good friend," said Albert, "I beg pardon for my intrusion ; but I was anxious to know from your own mouth if your master was really out or not."—"He is really out, sir," replied Baptistin.

"Out, even to me?"—"I know how happy my master always is to receive M. le Vicomte," said Baptistin ; "and I should therefore never think of including him in any general order."

"You are right ; and now I wish to see him on an affair of great importance ; do you think it will be long before he comes in?"

"No, I think not ; for he ordered his breakfast at ten o'clock."

"Well, I will go and take a turn in the Champs Elysées, and at ten o'clock I will return here ; meanwhile, if M. le Comte should come in, will you beg him not to go out again without seeing me?"

"You may depend on my doing so, sir," said Baptistin.

Albert left the fiacre in which he had come standing at the door of the count, intending to take a turn on foot. As he was passing the Allée des Veuves, he thought he saw the count's horses standing at Gossett's shooting-gallery ; he approached, and soon recognised the coachman. "Is M. le Comte shooting in the gallery?" said Morcerf.

"Yes, sir," replied the coachman. Whilst he was speaking, Albert had heard the report of two or three pistol-shots. He entered, and on his way met the waiter. "Excuse me, M. le Vicomte," said the lad ; "but will you have the kindness to wait a moment?"

"What for, Philip?" asked Albert, who, being a constant visitor there, did not understand this opposition to his entrance.

"Because the person who is now in the gallery prefers being alone, and never practises in the presence of any one."

"Not even before you, Philip? Then who loads his pistol?"

"His servant."—"A Nubian?"—"A Negro."

"It is he, then."—"Do you know this gentleman?"

"Yes, and I am come to look for him ; he is a friend of mine."

"Oh ! that is quite another thing, then. I will go immediately and inform him of your arrival." And Philip, urged by his own curiosity, entered the gallery ; a second afterwards, Monte-Cristo appeared on the threshold. "I ask your pardon, my dear count," said Albert, "for following you here ; and I must first tell you that it was not the fault of your servants that I did so, I alone am to blame for the indiscretion. I went to your house, and they told me you were out, but that they expected you home at ten o'clock to breakfast. I was walking about in order to pass away the time till ten o'clock, when I caught sight of your carriage and horses."—"What you have just said induces me to hope that you intend breakfasting with me."

"No, thank you, I am thinking of other things besides breakfast, just now ; perhaps we may take that meal at a later hour and in worse company."—"What on earth are you talking of?"

"I am to fight to-day."—"What for?"

"I am going to fight—"

"Yes, I understand that, but what is the quarrel? People fight for all sorts of reasons, you know."—"I fight in the cause of honour."

"Ah ! that is something serious."

"So serious, that I come to beg you to render me a service."

"What is it?"—"To be my second."

That is a serious matter, and we will not discuss it here ; let us speak

of nothing till we get home. Ali, bring me some water." The count turned up his sleeves, and passed into the little vestibule where the gentlemen were accustomed to wash their hands after shooting. "Come in, M. le Vicomte," said Philip in a low tone, "and I will show you something droll." Morcerf entered, and instead of the usual mark, he perceived some playing-cards fixed against the wall. At a distance Albert thought it was a complete suit, for he counted from the ace to the ten. "Ah! ah!" said Albert, "I see you were preparing for a game of cards."—"No," said the count, "I was making a suit of cards."

"How?" said Albert.

"Those are really aces and twos which you see, but my balls have turned them into threes, fives, sevens, eights, nines, and tens." Albert approached. In fact, the balls had actually pierced the cards in the exact places which the painted signs would otherwise have occupied, the lines and distances being as regularly kept as if they had been ruled with pencil. "*Diable!*" said Morcerf.

"What would you have, my dear viscount?" said Monte-Cristo, wiping his hands on the towel which Ali had brought him; "I must occupy my leisure moments in some way or other. But come, I am waiting for you." Both then entered Monte-Cristo's chariot, which in the course of a few minutes deposited them safely at No. 30. Monte-Cristo took Albert into his study, and pointing to a seat, placed another for himself. "Now let us talk the matter over quietly," said the count.

"You see I am perfectly composed," said Albert.

"With whom are you going to fight?"—"With Beauchamp."

"Is he one of your friends?"

"Of course; it is always with friends that one fights."

"I suppose you have some cause of quarrel?"—"I have!"

"What has he done to you?"—"There appeared in his journal last night—but wait, and read for yourself." And Albert handed over the paper to the count, who read as follows:—

"A correspondent at Yanina informs us of a fact of which until now we had remained in ignorance. The castle which formed the protection of the town was given up to the Turks by a French officer named Fernand, in whom the Grand Vizier, Ali Tebelen, had reposed the greatest confidence."

"Well!" said Monte-Cristo, "what do you see in that to annoy you?"

"What do I see in it?"—"Yes; what does it signify to you if the castle of Yanina was given up by a French officer?"

"It signifies to my father, the count of Morcerf, whose Christian name is Fernand!"—"Did your father serve Ali Pacha?"

"Yes; that is to say, he fought for the independence of the Greeks, and hence arises the calumny."

"Oh, my dear viscount, do talk reason!"

"I do not desire to do otherwise."—"Now, just tell me who the devil should know in France that the officer Fernand and the Count de Morcerf are one and the same person? and who cares now about Yanina, which was taken as long ago as the year 1822 or 1823?"

"That just proves the blackness of the perfidy: they have allowed all this time to elapse, and then, all of a sudden, rake up events which have been forgotten, to furnish materials for scandal, in order to tarnish the lustre of our high position. I inherit my father's name, and I do not choose that the shadow of disgrace should darken it. I am going to Beauchamp, in whose journal this paragraph appears, and I shall insist on his retracting the assertion before two witnesses."

"Beauchamp will never retract."—"Then he must fight."

"No he will not, for he will tell you, what is very true, that perhaps there were fifty officers in the Greek army bearing the same name."

"We will fight, nevertheless. I will efface that blot on my father's character. My father, who was such a brave soldier, whose career was so brilliant——"

"Oh, well, he will add, 'We are warranted in believing that this Fernand is not the illustrious Count de Morcerf, who also bears the same Christian name.' "—"I am determined not to be content with anything short of an entire retraction."

"And you intend to make him do it in the presence of two witnesses, do you?"—"Yes."

"You do wrong."—"Which means, I suppose, that you refuse the service which I asked of you?"

"You know my theory regarding duels; I told you my opinion on that subject, if you remember, when we were at Rome."—"Nevertheless, my dear count, I found you this morning engaged in an occupation but little consistent with the notions you profess to entertain."

"Because, my dear fellow, you understand one must never be eccentric. If one's lot is cast amongst fools, it is necessary to study folly. I shall, perhaps, find myself one day called out by some harebrained scamp, who has no more real cause of quarrel with me than you have with Beauchamp; he may take me to task for some foolish trifle or other, he will bring his witnesses, or will insult me in some public place, and I suppose I am expected to kill him for all that."—"You admit that you would fight, then? Well, if so, why do you object to my doing so?"—"I do not say that you ought not to fight, I only say that a duel is a serious thing, and ought not to be undertaken without due reflection."—"Did he reflect before he insulted my father?"

"If he spoke hastily, and owns that he did so, you ought to be satisfied."—"Ah, my dear count, you are far too indulgent."

"And you far too exacting. Supposing, for instance, and do not be angry at what I am going to say——"

"Well!"—"Supposing the assertion to be really true?"

"A son ought not to submit to such a stain on his father's honour."

"*Ma foi!* we live in times when there is much to which we must submit."—"That is precisely the fault of the age."

"And do you undertake to reform it?"

"Yes, as far as I am personally concerned."

"*Ma foi!* you are indeed rigid, my dear fellow!"—"Well, I own it."

"Are you quite impervious to good advice?"

"Not when it comes from a friend."

"And do you accord me that title?"—"Certainly I do."

"Well, then, before going to Beauchamp with your witnesses, seek further information on the subject."—"From whom?"

"From Haydée."—"Why, what can be the use of mixing a woman up in the affair?—what can she do in it?"

"She can declare to you, for example, that your father had no hand whatever in the defeat and death of the vizier; or if by chance he had, indeed, the misfortune to——"

"I have already told you, my dear count, that I would not for one moment admit of such a supposition."

"You reject this means of information, then?"

"I do—most decidedly."

"Then let me offer one more word of advice."

"Do so, then, but let it be the last."

"You do not wish to hear it, perhaps?"

"On the contrary, I request it."—"Do not take any witnesses with you when you go to Beauchamp—visit him alone."

"That would be contrary to all custom."

"Your case is not an ordinary one."

"And what is your reason for advising me to go alone?"

"Because then the affair will rest between you and Beauchamp."

"Explain yourself."—"I will do so. If Beauchamp be disposed to retract, you ought at least to give him the opportunity of doing it of his own free will; the satisfaction to you will be the same; if, on the contrary, he refuses to do so, it will then be quite time enough to admit two strangers into your secret."

"They will not be strangers, they will be friends."

"Ah, but the friends of to-day are the enemies of to-morrow; Beauchamp, for instance."—"So you recommend—"

"I recommend you to be prudent."

"Then you advise me to go alone to Beauchamp?"—"I do, and I will tell you why. When you wish to obtain some concession from a man's self-love, you must avoid even the appearance of wishing to wound it."—"I believe you are right."—"I am glad of it."

"Then I will go alone."

"Go; but you would do better still by not going at all."

"That is impossible."—"Do so, then; it will be a wiser plan than the first which you proposed."

"But if, in spite of all my precautions, I am at last obliged to fight, will you not be my second?"—"My dear viscount," said Monte-Cristo, gravely, "you must have seen before to-day that at all times and in all places I have been at your disposal, but the service which you have just demanded of me is one which it is out of my power to render you."

"Why?"—"Perhaps you may know at some future period, and, in the mean time, I request you to excuse my declining to put you in possession of my reasons."

"Well, I will have Franz and Château-Renaud; they will be the very men for it."—"Do so, then."

"But if I do fight, you will surely not object to giving me a lesson or two in shooting and fencing?"—"That, too, is impossible."

"What a singular being you are!—you will not interfere in anything."

"You are right—that is the principle on which I wish to act."

"We will say no more about it, then. Good-bye, count." Morcerf took his hat, and left the room. He found his chariot at the door, and doing his utmost to restrain his anger, he drove at once to Beauchamp's house. Beauchamp was in his office. It was one of those gloomy, dusty-looking apartments, such as journalists' offices have always been from time immemorial. The servant announced M. Albert de Morcerf. Beauchamp repeated the name to himself, as though he could scarcely believe that he had heard right, and then gave orders for him to be admitted. Albert entered. Beauchamp uttered an exclamation of surprise on seeing his friend leap over and trample under foot all the newspapers which were strewn about the room. "Here! here! my dear Albert!" said he, holding out his hand to the young man. "Are you out of your senses, or do you come peaceably to take breakfast with me? Try and find a seat—there is one by that geranium, which is the only thing in the room to remind me

that there are other leaves in the world besides leaves of paper."—"Beauchamp," said Albert, "it is of your journal that I come to speak."

"Indeed! what do you wish to say about it?"

"I desire that a statement contained in it should be rectified."

"To what do you allude? But pray sit down."

"Thank you," said Albert, with a cold and formal bow.

"Will you now have the kindness to explain the nature of the statement which has displeased you?"—"An announcement has been made which implicates the honour of a member of my family."

"What is it?" said Beauchamp, much surprised; "surely you must be mistaken."—"It is an article headed 'Yanina.'"

"'Yanina?'"—"Yes; really you appear to be totally ignorant of the cause which brings me here."

"Such is really the case, I assure you, upon my honour! Baptiste, give me yesterday's paper," cried Beauchamp.—"Here, I have brought mine with me," replied Albert.

Beauchamp took the paper, and read the article to which Albert pointed in an under-tone. "You see it is a serious annoyance," said Morcerf, when Beauchamp had finished the perusal of the paragraph. "Is the officer alluded to a relation of yours, then?" demanded the journalist.—"Yes," said Albert, blushing.

"Well, what do you wish me to do for you?" said Beauchamp, mildly.—"My dear Beauchamp, I wish you to contradict this statement." Beauchamp looked at Albert with a benevolent expression.

"Come," said he, "this matter will want a good deal of talking over; a retraction is always a serious thing, you know. Sit down, and I will read it again." Albert resumed his seat, and Beauchamp read, with more attention than at first, the lines denounced by his friend. "Well," said

assertion, will you not, Beauchamp?" said Albert, with increased though stifled anger.

"Yes," replied Beauchamp.—"Immediately?" said Albert.

"When I am convinced that the statement is false."—"What?"

"The thing is worth looking into, and I will take pains to investigate the matter thoroughly."

"But what is there to investigate, sir?" said Albert, enraged beyond measure at Beauchamp's last remark. "If you do not believe that it is my father, say so immediately; and if, on the contrary, you believe it to be him, state your reasons for doing so." Beauchamp looked at Albert with the smile which was so peculiar to him, and which, in its numerous modifications, served to express every varied feeling of his mind. "Sir," replied he, "if you came to me with the idea of demanding satisfaction, you should have gone at once to the point, and not have entertained me with the idle conversation to which I have been patiently listening for the last half-hour. Am I to put this construction on your visit?"—"Yes, if you will not consent to retract that infamous calumny."—"Wait a moment—no threats, if you please, M. Fernand Mondego, Vicomte de Morcerf; I never allow them from my enemies, and therefore shall not put up with them from my friends. You insist on my contradicting the article relating to General Fernand, an article in which, I assure you, on my word of honour, I have not taken the slightest share?"—"Yes, I insist on it!" said Albert, whose mind was beginning to get bewildered with the excitement of his feelings.

"And if I refuse to retract, you wish to fight, do you?" said Beauchamp, in a calm tone.—"Yes!" replied Albert, raising his voice.—"Well," said Beauchamp, "here is my answer, my dear sir. The article was not inserted by me—I was not even aware of it; but you have, by the step you have taken, called my attention to the paragraph in question, and it will remain until it shall be either contradicted or confirmed by some one who has a right to do so."

"Sir," said Albert, rising, "I will do myself the honour of sending my seconds to you, and you will be kind enough to arrange with them the place of meeting and the arms which we are to use. Do you understand me?"—"Certainly, my dear sir."

"And this evening, if you please, or to-morrow at the latest, we will meet."—"No, no! I will be on the ground at the proper time; but in my opinion (and I have a right to dictate the preliminaries, as it is I who have received the provocation)—in my opinion the time ought not to be yet. I know you to be well skilled in the management of the sword, whilst I am only moderately so; I know, too, that you are a good marksman—there we are about equal. I know that a duel between us two would be a serious affair, because you are brave, and I am brave also. I do not therefore wish either to kill you, or to be killed myself, without a cause. Now, I am going to put a question to you, and one very much to the purpose, too. Do you insist on this retraction so far as to kill me if I do not make it, although I have repeated more than once, and affirmed on my honour, that I was ignorant of the thing with which you charge me, and although I still declare that it is impossible for any one but you to recognise the Count de Morcerf under the name of Fernand?"

"I maintain my original resolution."—"Very well, my dear sir; then I consent to cut throats with you. But I require three weeks' preparation; at the end of that time I shall come and say to you, 'The assertion is false, and I retract it,' or, 'The assertion is true,' when I shall immediately draw

the sword from its sheath, or the pistols from the case, whichever you please."

"Three weeks!" cried Albert; "they will pass as slowly as three centuries when I am all the time suffering dishonour."—"Had you continued to remain on amicable terms with me, I should have said, 'Patience, my friend;' but you have constituted yourself my enemy, therefore I say, 'What does that signify to me, sir?'"—"Well, let it be three weeks, then," said Morcerf; "but remember, at the expiration of that time no delay or subterfuge will justify you in—"

"M. Albert de Morcerf," said Beauchamp, rising in his turn, "I cannot throw you out of window for three weeks—that is to say, for twenty-four days to come—nor have you any right to split my skull open till that time has elapsed. To-day is the 29th of August; the 21st of September will, therefore, be the conclusion of the term agreed on, and till that time arrives—and it is the advice of a gentleman which I am about to give you—till then we will refrain from growling and barking like two dogs chained within sight of each other." When he had concluded this speech, Beauchamp bowed coldly to Albert, turned his back upon him, and retired to his printing-office. Albert vented his anger on a pile of newspapers, which he sent flying all over the room by switching them violently with his stick; after which ebullition he departed—not, however, without walking several times to the door of the printing-office, as if he had half a mind to enter it. Whilst Albert was lashing the front of his chariot in the same manner that he had done to the newspapers which were the innocent agents of his discomfiture, as he was crossing the barrier he perceived Morrel, who was walking with a quick step and a bright eye. He was passing the Chinese Baths, and appeared to have come from the direction of the *Porte Saint-Martin*, and to be going towards the *Magdalen*. "Ah," said Morcerf,

of Valentine. She looked marvellously beautiful in her deep mourning dress, and Morrel experienced such intense delight in gazing upon her that he felt as if he could almost have dispensed with the conversation of her grandfather. But the easy-chair of the old man was heard rolling along the floor, and he soon made his appearance in the room. Noirtier acknowledged by a look of extreme kindness and benevolence the thanks which Morrel lavished on him for his timely intervention on behalf of Valentine and himself—an intervention which had saved them from despair. Morrel then cast on the invalid an interrogative look as to the new favour which he designed to bestow on him. Valentine was sitting at a little distance from them, timidly awaiting the moment when she should be obliged to speak. Noirtier fixed his eyes on her. "Am I to say what you told me?" asked Valentine. Noirtier made a sign that she was to do so.

"M. Morrel," said Valentine to the young man, who was regarding her with the most intense interest, "my grandfather, M. Noirtier, had a thousand things to say, which he told me three days ago; and now he has sent for you, that I may repeat them to you; I will repeat them, then; and since he has chosen me as his interpreter, I will be faithful to the trust, and will not alter a word of his intentions."—"Oh, I am listening with the greatest impatience," replied the young man; "speak, I beg of you." Valentine cast down her eyes; this was a good omen for Morrel, for he knew that nothing but happiness could have the power of thus overcoming Valentine. "My grandfather intends leaving this house," said she, "and Barrois is looking out suitable apartments for him in another."—"But you, Mademoiselle de Villefort, you, who are necessary to M. Noirtier's happiness—"

"Me?" interrupted Valentine; "I shall not leave my grandfather, that is an understood thing between us. My apartment will be close to his. Now, M. de Villefort must either give his consent to this plan or his refusal; in the first case, I shall leave directly; and in the second, I shall await my majority, which will be completed in about ten months. Then I shall be free, I shall have an independent fortune, and—"

"And what?" demanded Morrel.—"And with my grandfather's consent I shall fulfil the promise which I have made you." Valentine pronounced these few last words in such a low tone, that nothing but Morrel's intense interest in what she was saying could have enabled him to hear them. "Have I not explained your wishes, grandpapa?" said Valentine, addressing Noirtier.—"Yes," looked the old man.—"Once under my grandfather's roof, M. Morrel can visit me in the presence of my good and worthy protector, if we still feel that the union we contemplated will be likely to insure our future comfort and happiness; in that case I shall expect M. Morrel to come and claim me at my own hands. But, alas! I have heard it said that hearts inflamed by obstacles to their desire grow cold in time of security; I trust we shall never find it so in our experience!"

"Oh!" cried Morrel, almost tempted to throw himself on his knees before Noirtier and Valentine, and to adore them as two superior beings, "what have I ever done in my life to merit such unbounded happiness?"—"Until that time," continued the young girl, in a calm and self-possessed tone of voice, "we will conform to circumstances, and be guided by the wishes of our friends, so long as those wishes do not tend finally to separate us; in one word, and I repeat it, because it expresses all I wish to convey,—we will wait."

"And I swear to make all the sacrifices which this word imposes, sir," said Morrel, "not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness."—"Therefore," continued Valentine, looking playfully at Maximilian, "no more inconsiderate actions—no more rash projects; for you surely would not wish to compromise the feelings of her who from this day regards herself as destined, honourably and happily, to bear your name?" Morrel looked obedience to her commands. Noirtier regarded the lovers with a look of ineffable tenderness, whilst Barrois, who had remained in the room in the character of a man privileged to know everything that passed, smiled on the youthful couple as he wiped the perspiration from his bald forehead. "How hot you look, my good Barrois!" said Valentine.

"Ah! I have been running very fast, mademoiselle; but I must do M. Morrel the justice to say that he ran still faster." Noirtier directed their attention to a waiter, on which was placed a decanter containing lemonade and a glass. The decanter was nearly full, with the exception of a little, which had been already drunk by M. Noirtier.

"Come, Barrois," said the young girl, "take some of this lemonade; I see you are coveting a good draught of it."—"The fact is, mademoiselle," said Barrois, "I am dying with thirst, and since you are so kind as to offer it me, I cannot say I should at all object to drinking your health in a glass of it."—"Take some, then, and come back immediately." Barrois took away the waiter, and hardly was he outside the door, which, in his haste, he forgot to shut, than they saw him throw back his head and empty to the very dregs the glass which Valentine had filled. Valentine and Morrel were exchanging their adieux in the presence of Noirtier when a ring was heard at the door-bell. It was the signal of a visit. Valentine looked at her watch.

appearance of being ready to start from their sockets ; his head fell back, and the lower extremities of the body began to stiffen. Valentine uttered a cry of horror ; Morrel took her in his arms, as if to defend her from some unknown danger. " M. d'Avrigny ! M. d'Avrigny !" cried she, in a stifled voice. " Help ! help !" Barrois turned round and, with a great effort, stumbled a few steps, then fell at the feet of Noirtier, and resting his hand on the knee of the invalid, exclaimed, " My master ! my good master !" At this moment M. de Villefort, attracted by the noise, appeared on the threshold. Morrel relaxed his hold of Valentine, and retreating to a distant corner of the room, he remained half hidden behind a curtain. Pale as if he had been gazing on a serpent, he fixed his terrified eye on the agonized sufferer.

Noirtier, burning with impatience and terror, was in despair at his utter inability to help his old domestic, whom he regarded more in the light of a friend than a servant. One might trace the terrible conflict which was going on between the living energetic mind and the inanimate and helpless body, by the fearful swelling of the veins of his forehead and the contraction of the muscles round the eye. Barrois, his features convulsed, his eyes suffused with blood, and his head thrown back, was lying at full length, beating the floor with his hands, whilst his legs were become so stiff that they looked as if they would break rather than bend. A slight appearance of foam was visible round the mouth, and he breathed painfully, and with extreme difficulty.

Villefort seemed stupefied with astonishment, and remained gazing intently on the scene before him without uttering a word. He had not seen Morrel. After a moment of dumb contemplation, during which his face became pale, and his hair seemed to stand on end, he sprang towards the door, crying out, " Doctor ! doctor ! come instantly ; pray come !" — " Madame ! madame !" cried Valentine, calling her step-mother, and running upstairs to meet her ; " come quick, quick ! and bring your bottle of smelling-salts with you."

" What is the matter ?" said Madame de Villefort, in a harsh and constrained tone. " Oh ! come ! come !" — " But where is the doctor ?" exclaimed Villefort ; " where is he ?" Madame de Villefort now deliberately descended the staircase. In one hand she held her handkerchief, with which she appeared to be wiping her face, and in the other a bottle of English smelling-salts. Her first look on entering the room was at Noirtier, whose face, independent of the emotion which such a scene could not fail of producing, proclaimed him to be in possession of his usual health ; her second glance was at the dying man. She turned pale, and her eye passed quickly from the servant, and rested on the master.

" In the name of Heaven, madame," said Villefort, " where is the doctor ? He was with you just now. You see this is a fit of apoplexy, and he might be saved if he could but be bled !" — " Has he eaten anything lately ?" asked Madame de Villefort, eluding her husband's question. " Madame," replied Valentine, " he has not even breakfasted. He has been running very fast on an errand with which my grandfather charged him, and when he returned he took nothing but a glass of lemonade." — " Ah !" said Madame de Villefort ; " why did he not take wine ? Lemonade was a very bad thing for him."

" Grandpapa's bottle of lemonade was standing just by his side ; poor Barrois was very thirsty, and was thankful to drink anything he could find." Madame de Villefort started. Noirtier looked at her with a glance of the most profound scrutiny. " He has such a short neck," said she.

"Madame," said De Villefort, "I ask where is M. d'Avrigny? In God's name answer me!"—"He is with Edward, who is not quite well," replied Madame de Villefort, no longer being able to avoid answering.

Villefort rushed upstairs to fetch him himself. "Take this," said Madame de Villefort, giving her smelling-bottle to Valentine. "They will, no doubt, bleed him; therefore I will retire, for I cannot endure the sight of blood," and she followed her husband upstairs. Morrel now emerged from his hiding-place, where he had remained quite unperceived, so great had been the general confusion. "Go away as quick as you can, Maximilian," said Valentine, "and stay till I send for you. Go."

Morrel looked towards Noirtier for permission to retire. The old man, who had preserved all his usual *sang froid*, made a sign to him to do so. The young man pressed Valentine's hand to his lips, and then left the house by a back staircase. At the same moment that he quitted the room, Villefort and the doctor entered by an opposite entrance. Barrois was now showing signs of returning consciousness; the crisis seemed past; a low moaning was heard, and he raised himself on one knee. D'Avrigny and Villefort laid him on a couch. "What do you prescribe, doctor?" demanded Villefort. "Give me some water and ether. You have some in the house, have you not?"

"Yes."—"Send for some oil of turpentine and tartar emetic."

Villefort immediately despatched a messenger. "And now let every one retire."—"Must I go, too?" asked Valentine, timidly.

"Yes, mademoiselle, you especially," replied the doctor, abruptly.

Valentine looked at M. d'Avrigny with astonishment, kissed her grandfather on the forehead, and left the room. The doctor closed the door after her with a gloomy air. "Look! look! doctor," said Villefort, "he is quite coming round again; I really do not think, after all, it is anything

parts empty still standing on the waiter, where it had been left. He darted upon it as an eagle would seize upon its prey. Panting with loss of breath, he returned to the room he had just left. Madame de Villefort was slowly ascending the steps which led to her room. "Is this the decanter you spoke of?" asked D'Avrigny.

"Yes, doctor."—"Is this the same lemonade of which you partook?"—"I believe so."—"What did it taste like?"—"It had a bitter taste."

The doctor poured some drops of the lemonade into the palm of his hand, put his lips to it, and after having rinsed his mouth as a man does when he is tasting wine, he spat the liquor into the fireplace.

"It is no doubt the same," said he: "did you drink some, too, M. Noirtier?"

"Yes."—"And did you also discover a bitter taste?"

"Yes."—"Oh, doctor!" cried Barrois, "the fit is coming on again. Oh! have pity on me." The doctor flew to his patient. "That emetic, Villefort; see if it is coming. Villefort sprang into the passage, exclaiming, "The emetic! the emetic!—is it come yet?" No one answered. The most profound terror reigned throughout the house. "If I had anything by means of which I could inflate the lungs," said D'Avrigny, looking around him, "perhaps I might prevent suffocation. But there is nothing which would do!—nothing!"—"Oh, sir," cried Barrois, "are you going to let me die without help? Oh! I am dying! Oh! save me!"

"A pen! a pen!" said the doctor. There was one lying on the table; he endeavoured to introduce it into the mouth of the patient; who, in the midst of his convulsions, was making vain attempts to vomit; but the jaws were so clenched that the pen could not pass them. This second attack was much more violent than the first, and he had slipped from the couch to the ground, where he was writhing in agony. The doctor left him in this paroxysm, knowing that he could do nothing to alleviate it, and going up to Noirtier, said abruptly,—"How do you find yourself?—well?"—"Yes."

"Have you any weight on the chest; or does your stomach feel light and comfortable—eh?"—"Yes."

"Then you feel pretty much as you generally do after you have had the dose which I am accustomed to give you every Sunday?"—"Yes."

"Did Barrois make your lemonade?"—"Yes."

"Was it you who asked him to drink some of it?"—"No."

"Was it M. de Villefort?"—"No."

"Madame?"—"No."

"It was your granddaughter, then, was it not?"—"Yes." A groan from Barrois, accompanied by a yawn which seemed to crack the very jawbones, attracted the attention of M. d'Avrigny; he left M. Noirtier, and returned to the sick man. "Barrois," said the doctor, "can you speak?" Barrois muttered a few unintelligible words. "Try and make an effort to do so, my good man," said D'Avrigny. Barrois reopened his blood-shot eyes. "Who made the lemonade?"—"I did."

"Did you bring it to your master directly it was made?"—"No."

"You left it somewhere, then, in the meantime?"

"Yes; I left it in the pantry, because I was called away."

"Who brought it into this room, then?"—"Mademoiselle Valentine." D'Avrigny struck his forehead with his hand. "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed he. "Doctor! doctor!" cried Barrois, who felt another fit coming.

"Will they never bring that emetic?" asked the doctor.

"Here is a glass with one already prepared," said Villefort, entering the room.—"Who prepared it?"—"The chemist who came here with me."—"Drink it," said the doctor to Barrois. "Impossible, doctor, it is too late; my throat is closing up. I am choking! Oh! my heart! Ah! my head!—Oh! what agony!—Shall I suffer like this long?"—"No, no, friend," replied the doctor, "you will soon cease to suffer."

"Ah! I understand you," said the unhappy man. "My God, have mercy upon me!" and, uttering a fearful cry, Barrois fell back as if he had been struck by lightning. D'Avrigny put his hand to his heart, and placed a glass before his lips. "Well!" said Villefort. "Go to the kitchen, and get me some syrup of violets." Villefort went immediately. "Do not be alarmed, M. Noirtier," said D'Avrigny, "I am going to take my patient into the next room to bleed him; this sort of attack is very frightful to witness."

And, taking Barrois under the arms, he dragged him into an adjoining room; but, almost immediately, he returned to fetch the remainder of the lemonade. Noirtier closed his right eye. "You want Valentine, do you not? I will tell them to send her to you." Villefort returned, and D'Avrigny met him in the passage. "Well! how is he now?" asked he. "Come in here," said D'Avrigny; and he took him into the chamber where the sick man lay. "Is he still in a fit?" said the procureur du roi.—"He is dead."

Villefort drew back a few steps, and, clasping his hands, exclaimed, with real amazement and sympathy, "Dead! and so soon too!"—"Yes, it is very soon!" said the doctor, looking at the corpse before him; "but that ought not to astonish you; Monsieur and Madame de Saint-Méran died as soon. People die very suddenly in your house, M. de Villefort."

"What!" cried the magistrate, with an accent of horror and consternation, "are you still harping on that terrible idea?"—"Still, sir; and I shall always do so," replied D'Avrigny, "for it has never for one instant ceased to retain possession of my mind: and that you may be quite sure I am not mistaken this time, listen well to what I am going to say, M. de Villefort." The magistrate trembled convulsively. "There is a poison which destroys life almost without leaving any perceptible traces. I know it well; I have studied it in all its qualities and in the effects which it produces. I recognised the presence of this poison in the case of poor Barrois as well as in that of Madame de Saint-Méran. There is a way of detecting its presence. It restores the blue colour of litmus-paper reddened by an acid, and it turns syrup of violets green. We have no litmus-paper, but, hark! here they come with the syrup of violets." The doctor was right; steps were heard in the passage. M. d'Avrigny opened the door, and took from the hands of the *femme-de-chambre* a cup which contained two or three spoonfuls of the syrup; he then carefully closed the door. "Look!" said he to the procureur du roi, whose heart beat so loudly that it might almost be heard; "here is in this cup some syrup of violets, and this decanter contains the remainder of the lemonade of which M. Noirtier and Barrois partook. If the lemonade be pure and inoffensive the syrup will colour; if, on the contrary, the lemonade be drugged with poison, the syrup will become green. Look well at it!"

The doctor then slowly poured some drops of the lemonade from the *decanter* into the cup, and, in an instant, a kind of light cloudy sediment began to form at the bottom of the cup; this sediment first took a blue shade, then from the colour of sapphire it passed to that of opal, and from

opal to emerald. Arrived at this last hue, it changed no more. The result of the experiment left no doubt whatever on the mind.

"The unfortunate Barrois has been poisoned," said D'Avrigny, "and I will maintain this assertion before God and man." Villefort said nothing, but he clasped his hands, opened his haggard eyes, and, overcome with his emotion, sank into a chair.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE ACCUSATION.

M. D'AVRIGNY soon restored the magistrate to consciousness, who had looked like a second corpse in that chamber of death. "Oh, death is in my house!" cried Villefort.

"Say, rather, crime!" replied the doctor.—"M. d'Avrigny," cried Villefort, "I cannot tell you all I feel at this moment,—terror, grief, madness."

"Yes," said M. d'Avrigny, with an imposing calmness, "but I think it is now time to act. I think it is time to stop this torrent of mortality. I can no longer bear to be in possession of these secrets without the hope of seeing the victims and society generally revenged." Villefort cast a gloomy look around him. "In my house!" murmured he, "in my house!"—"Come, magistrate," said M. d'Avrigny, "show yourself a man; as an interpreter of the law, do honour to your profession by sacrificing your selfish interests to it."

"You make me shudder, doctor! Do you talk of a sacrifice?"

"I do."—"Do you then suspect any one?"

"I suspect no one; death raps at your door—it enters—it goes, not blindfolded, but circumspectly, from room to room. Well! I follow its course, I track its passage; I adopt the wisdom of the ancients, and feel my way, for my friendship for your family and my respect for you are as a twofold bandage over my eyes; well——"

"Oh! speak, speak, doctor; I shall have courage."

"Well, sir, you have in your establishment, or in your family, perhaps, one of those frightful phenomena of which each century produces only one. Locuste and Agrippina, living at the same time, are an exception, and proves the determination of Providence to effect the entire ruin of the Roman empire, sullied by so many crimes. Brunehaut and Frédégonde are the results of the painful struggle of civilisation in its infancy, when man was learning to control mind, were it even by an emissary from the realms of darkness. All these women had been, or were, beautiful. The same flower of innocence had flourished, or was still, flourishing on their brow, that is seen on the brow of the culprit in your house." Villefort shrieked, clasped his hands, and looked at the doctor with a supplicating air. But the latter pursued without pity.

"'Seek whom the crime will profit,' says an axiom of jurisprudence."

—"Doctor," cried Villefort, "alas, doctor! how often has man's justice been deceived by those fatal words. I know not why, but I feel that this crime——"

"You acknowledge, then, the existence of the crime?"

"Yes, I see too plainly that it does exist. But it seems that it is intended to affect me personally. I fear an attack myself, after all these disasters."—"Oh, man!" murmured D'Avrigny, "the most selfish of all animals, the most personal of all creatures, who believes the earth turns,

The doctor, without shaking his head, went out to what he had said, went out the whole household. The same eve assembled in the kitchen, and had Madame de Villefort they wished to le increased wages, could induce them replied, "We must go, for death is in of prayers and entreaties, testifying master and mistress, and especially kind, and so gentle. Villefort looked was in tears ; and, strange as it was, in sight of these tears, he looked also at M to him as if a slight gloomy smile had meteors which are seen passing in a stormy sky.

CHAPTER

THE ROOM OF THE

THE evening of the day on which the house with feelings of shame and anger the projected alliance between their two with curled hair, moustaches in perfect fitted admirably, had entered the court Chaussée d'Antin. He had not been in his room before he drew Danglars aside and, after an ingenious preamble, related since his noble father's departure. He knew which had been chosen.

I might wish to settle in France, he left me at his departure, together with the papers constituting my identity, a letter promising, if he approved of my choice, 150,000 livres per annum from the day I was married. So far as I can judge, I suppose this to be a quarter of my father's revenue."

"I," said Danglars, "have always intended giving my daughter 500,000 francs as her dowry; she is, besides, my sole heiress."

"All would then be easily arranged if the baroness and her daughter are willing. We should command an annuity of 175,000 livres. Supposing, also, I should persuade the marquis to give me my capital, which is not likely, but still is possible, we would place these two or three millions in your hands, whose talent might make it realise ten per cent."

"I never give more than four per cent., and generally only three and a half; but to my son-in-law I would give five, and we would share the profit."—"Very good, father-in-law," said Cavalcanti, yielding to his low-born nature, which would escape sometimes through the aristocratic gloss with which he sought to conceal it. Correcting himself immediately, he said, "Excuse me, sir; hope alone makes me almost mad,—what will not reality do?"—"But," said Danglars, who on his part, did not perceive how soon the conversation, which was at first disinterested, was turning to a business transaction, "there is, doubtless, a part of your fortune your father could not refuse you?"

"Which?" asked the young man.

"That you inherit from your mother."

"Truly, from my mother, Leonora Corsinari."

"How much may it amount to?"—"Indeed, sir," said Andrea, "I assure you I have never given the subject a thought; but I suppose it must have been at least two millions." Danglars felt as much overcome with joy as the miser who finds a lost treasure, or as the shipwrecked mariner who feels himself on the solid ground instead of in the abyss which he expected would swallow him up.

"Well, sir," said Andrea, bowing to the banker respectfully, "may I hope?"—"You may not only hope," said Danglars, "but consider it a settled thing, if no obstacle arises on your part."

"I am, indeed, rejoiced," said Andrea.

"But," said Danglars, thoughtfully, "how is it that your patron, M. de Monte-Cristo, did not make this proposal for you?" Andrea blushed imperceptibly. "I have just left the count, sir," said he, "he is, doubtless, a delightful man, but inconceivably singular in his ideas: he esteems me highly; he even told me he had not the slightest doubt that my father would give me the capital instead of the interest of my property; he has promised to use his influence to obtain it for me; but he also declared that he never had taken on himself the responsibility of making proposals for another, and he never would. I must, however, do him the justice to add, that he assured me, if ever he had regretted the repugnance he felt to such a step, it was on this occasion, because he thought the projected union would be a happy and suitable one. Besides, if he will do nothing officially, he will answer any questions you propose to him. And now," continued he, with one of his most charming smiles, "having finished talking to the father-in-law, I must address myself to the banker."

"And what may you have to say to him?" said Danglars, laughing in his turn.

"That the day after to-morrow I shall have to draw upon you for about four thousand francs; but the count, expecting my bachelor's revenue

could not suffice for the coming month's outlay, has offered me a draught for twenty thousand francs. It bears his signature, as you see, which is all-sufficient."—"Bring me a million such as that," said Danglars, "I shall be well pleased;" putting the draught in his pocket. "Fix your own hour for to-morrow, and my cashier shall call on you with a check for eighty thousand francs."

"At ten o'clock then, if you please: I should like it early, as I am going into the country to-morrow."

"Very well, at ten o'clock; you are still at the *Hôtel des Princes*?"

"Yes." The following morning, with the banker's usual punctuality, the eighty thousand francs were placed in the young man's hands, as he was on the point of starting, having left two hundred francs for Caderousse. He went out chiefly to avoid this dangerous enemy, and returned as late as possible in the evening. But scarcely had he stepped out of his carriage, when the porter met him with a parcel in his hand. "Sir," said he, "the man has been."

"What man?" said Andrea, carelessly, apparently forgetting him whom he but too well recollected.

"Him to whom your excellency pays that little annuity."

"Oh!" said Andrea, "my father's old servant. Well, you gave him the two hundred francs I had left for him?"

"Yes, your excellency." Andrea had expressed a wish to be thus addressed. "But," continued the porter, "he would not take them." Andrea turned pale; but as it was dark, no one noticed his paleness. "What! he would not take them?" said he, with slight emotion.

"No, he wished to speak to your excellency; I told him you were gone out, which, after some dispute, he believed, and gave me this letter, which he had brought with him already sealed."

"Give it to me," said Andrea, and he took the letter from the porter's hand.

"Exactly."—"He lives at the end of the yard, on the left, on the third story." Andrea went as she directed him, and on the third floor he found a hare's paw, which, by the hasty ringing of the bell, it was evident he pulled with considerable ill-temper. A moment after, Caderousse's face appeared at the grating in the door. "Ah! you are punctual," said he, as he unbolted the door.

"Confound you and your punctuality!" said Andrea, throwing himself into a chair in a manner which implied that he would rather have flung it at the head of his host.

"Come, come, my little fellow, don't be angry. See, I have thought about you—look at the good breakfast we are going to have; nothing but what you are fond of." Andrea, indeed, inhaled the scent of something cooking, which was not unwelcome to him, hungry as he was; it was that mixture of fat and garlic peculiar to provincial kitchens of an inferior order, added to that of dried fish, and above all, the pungent smell of musk and cloves. These odours escaped from two deep dishes, which were covered, and placed on a stove, and from a copper pan placed in an old iron pot. In an adjoining room, Andrea saw also a tolerably clean table prepared for two, two bottles of wine sealed, the one with green, the other with yellow, a considerable portion of brandy in a decanter, and a measure of fruit in a cabbage-leaf, cleverly arranged on an earthenware plate.

"What do you think of it, my little fellow?" said Caderousse. "Ay! that smells good! you know I used to be a good cook; do you recollect how you used to lick your fingers? You were among the first who tasted any of my dishes, and I think you relished them tolerably." While speaking, Caderousse went on peeling a fresh supply of onions.

"But," said Andrea, ill-temperedly, "*pardieu!* if it was only to breakfast with you, you disturbed me, I wish the devil had taken you!"

"My boy," said Caderousse, sententiously, "one can talk while eating. And then, you ungrateful being! you are not pleased to see an old friend? I am weeping with joy." He was truly crying, but it would have been difficult to say whether joy or the onions produced the greatest effect on the lachrymal gland of the old inn-keeper of the Pont-du-Gard. "Hold your tongue, hypocrite!" said Andrea; "you love me."

"Yes, I do, or may the devil take me. I know it is a weakness," said Caderousse, "but it overpowers me."

"And yet it has not prevented your sending for me to play me some trick."

"Come!" said Caderousse, wiping his large knife on his apron, "if I did not like you, do you think I should endure the wretched life you lead me? Think for a moment: you have your servant's clothes on—you therefore keep a servant; I have none, and am obliged to prepare my own meals: you abuse my cookery because you dine at the table d'hôte of the Hôtel des Princes, or the Café de Paris. Well! I, too, could keep a servant; I, too, could have a tilbury; I, too, could dine where I like; but why do I not? Because I would not annoy my little Benedetto. Come! just acknowledge that I could, eh!" This address was accompanied by a look which was by no means difficult to understand. "Well!" said Andrea, "admitting your love, why do you want me to breakfast with you?"

"That I may have the pleasure of seeing you, my little fellow."

"What is the use of seeing me after we have made all our arrangements?"—"Eh! dear friend," said Caderousse, "are wills ever made

without codicils? But you first came to breakfast, did you not? Well! sit down, and let us begin with these pilchards, and this fresh butter, which I have put on some vine-leaves, to please you, wicked one. Ah! yes; you look at my room, my four straw chairs, my images, three francs each. But what do you expect? this is not the *Hôtel des Princes*."

"Come! you are growing discontented, you are no longer happy; you, who only wish to appear a retired baker." Caderousse sighed.

"Well! what have you to say? you have seen your dream realized."

"I can still say it is a dream; a retired baker, my poor *Benedetto*, is rich—he has an annuity."

"Well, you have an annuity."—"I have."

"Yes, since I bring you your two hundred francs." Caderousse shrugged up his shoulders. "It is humiliating," said he, "thus to receive money given grudgingly; an uncertain supply which may soon fail. You see I am obliged to economize, in case your prosperity should cease. Well, my friend, fortune is inconstant, as said the chaplain of—regiment. I know your prosperity is great, rascal; you are to marry the daughter of *Danglars*."

"What! of *Danglars*?"

"Yes, to be sure! must I say *Baron Danglars*? I might as well say *Count Benedetto*. He was an old friend of mine, and if he had not so bad a memory, he ought to invite me to your wedding, seeing he came to mine. Yes, yes, to mine; forsooth! he was not so proud then; he was an under-clerk to the good *M. Morrel*. I have dined many times with him and the count de *Morcerf*; so you see I have some high connections, and were I to cultivate them a little, we might meet in the same drawing-rooms."—"Come, your jealousy represents everything to you in the wrong light."

"That is all very fine, my *Benedetto*, but I know what I am saying. Perhaps I may one day put on my best coat, and presenting myself at the great gate, introduce myself. Meanwhile let us sit down and eat." Caderousse set the example, and attacked the breakfast with good appetite, praising each dish he set before his visitor. The latter seemed to have resigned himself: he drew the corks, and partook largely of the fish with the garlic and fat. "Ah! compeer," said Caderousse, "you are getting on better terms with your old landlord!"—"Faith, yes," replied *Andrea*, whose hunger prevailed over every other feeling.

"So you like it, you rogue?"—"So much that I wonder how a man who can cook thus can complain of hard living."

"Do you see," said Caderousse, "all my happiness is marred by one thought?"—"What is that?"

"That I am dependent on another, I who have always gained my own livelihood honestly."

"Do not let that disturb you, I have enough for two."

"No, truly; you may believe me if you will; at the end of every month I am tormented by remorse."—"Good Caderousse!"

"So much so, that yesterday I would not take the two hundred francs."

"Yes, you wished to speak to me: but was it indeed remorse, tell me?"

"True remorse; and, besides, an idea had struck me." *Andrea* shuddered; he always did so at Caderousse's ideas. "It is miserable—do you see?—always to wait till the end of the month."—"Oh!" said *Andrea*, philosophically, determined to watch his companion narrowly,

"does not life pass in waiting? Do I, for instance, fare better? Well, I wait patiently, do I not?"

"Yes, because instead of expecting two hundred wretched francs, you expect five or six thousand, perhaps ten, perhaps even twelve; for you take care not to let any one know the utmost; down there, you always had little presents, and Christmas-boxes, you tried to hide from your poor friend Caderousse. Fortunately he is a cunning fellow, that friend Caderousse."

"There you are beginning again to ramble, to talk again and again of the past! But what is the use of teasing me with so much repetition?"

"Ah! you are only one-and-twenty, and can forget the past; I am fifty, and am obliged to recollect it. But let us return to business."

"Yes."—"I was going to say, if I were in your place——"

"Well."—"I would realize——"

"How would you realize?"

"I would ask for six months' in advance, under pretence of being able to purchase a farm, then with my six months' I would decamp."

"Well, well," said Andrea, "that is no bad thought."

"My dear friend," said Caderousse, "eat of my bread, and take my advice; you will be none the worse off, physically or morally."

"But," said Andrea, "why do you not act on the advice you give me? Why do you not realize a six months', a year's advance even, and retire to Brussels? Instead of living the retired baker, you might live as a bankrupt, using his privileges; that would be very good."

"But how the devil would you have me retire on twelve hundred francs?"—"Ah! Caderousse," said Andrea, "how covetous you are! two months since you were dying with hunger."

"In eating the appetite grows," said Caderousse, grinning and showing his teeth, like a monkey laughing or a tiger growling. "And," added he, biting off, with those large white teeth, an enormous mouthful of bread, "I have formed a plan." Caderousse's plans alarmed Andrea still more than his ideas; ideas were but the germ, the plan was reality. "Let me see your plan; I dare say it is a pretty one."

"Why not? Who formed the plan by which we left the establishment of M——! eh? was it not I? and it was no bad one I believe, since here we are!"

"I do not say," replied Andrea, "that you never make a good one; but let us see your plan."

"Well," pursued Caderousse, "can you without expending one sou, put me in the way of getting fifteen thousand francs? No, fifteen thousand are not enough, I cannot again become an honest man with less than thirty thousand francs."

"No," replied Andrea, drily, "no, I cannot."

"I do not think you understand me," replied Caderousse, calmly; "I said without your laying out a sou."

"Do you want me to commit a robbery, to spoil all my good fortune—and yours with mine—and both of us to be dragged down there again?"

"It would make very little difference to me," said Caderousse, "if I were retaken; I am a poor creature to live alone, and sometimes pine for my old comrades; not like you, heartless creature, who would be glad never to see them again!" Andrea did more than tremble this time, he turned pale.

"Come, Caderousse, no nonsense!" said he.

"Don't alarm yourself, my little Benedetto, but just point out to me

some means of gaining those thirty thousand francs without your assistance; and I will contrive it."

"Well! I will see! I will recollect you!" said Andrea.

"Meanwhile you will raise my month to five hundred francs, my little fellow? I have a fancy, and mean to get a housekeeper."

"Well! you shall have your five hundred francs," said Andrea; "but it is very hard for me, my poor Caderousse—you take advantage—"

"Bah!" said Caderousse, "when you have access to countless stores." One would have said Andrea anticipated his companion's words, so did his eye flash like lightning, but it was but for a moment. "True," he replied, "and my protector is very kind."

"That dear protector," said Caderousse; "and how much does he give you monthly?"—"Five thousand francs."

"As many thousands as you give me hundreds! truly, it is only bastards who are thus fortunate. Five thousand francs per month! what the devil can you do with all that?"—"Oh! it is no trouble to spend that; and I am like you, I want a capital."

"A capital!—yes—I understand—every one would like a capital."

"Well! and I shall get one."

"Who will give it to you—your prince?"

"Yes, my prince. But unfortunately I must wait."

"You must wait for what?" asked Caderousse.

"For his death."—"The death of your prince?"

"Yes."—"How so?"

"Because he has made his will in my favour."

"Indeed!?"—"On my honour."

"For how much?"—"For five hundred thousand."

"Only that! It's little enough!"

"But so it is."—"No, it cannot be!"

"Are you my friend, Caderousse?"

"Yes, in life or death."—"Well! I will tell you a secret."

"What is it?"—"But remember—"

"Ah! *André!* mute as a carp."—"Well! I think—" Andrea stopped and looked around. "You think? Do not fear: *André!* we are alone."—"I think I have discovered my father."

"Your true father?"—"Yes."

"Not old Cavalcanti?"

"No, for he is gone again; the true one, as you say."

"And that father is—"

"Well! Caderousse, it is Monte-Cristo."—"Bah!"

"Yes, you understand, that explains all. He cannot acknowledge me openly, it appears, but he does it through M. Cavalcanti, and gives him fifty thousand francs for it."

"Fifty thousand francs for being your father! I would have done it for half that, for twenty thousand, for fifteen thousand; why did you not think of me, ungrateful man?"

"Did I know anything about it, when it was all done when I was down there?"

"Ah! truly? And you say that by his will—"

"He leaves me five hundred thousand livres."

"Are you sure of it?"—"He showed it me; but that is not all—there is a codicil, as I said just now."

"Probably."—"And in that codicil he acknowledges me."

"Oh ! the good father ! the brave father ! the very honest father !" said Caderousse, twirling a plate in the air between his two hands,

"Now, say if I conceal anything from you !"

"No, and your confidence makes you honourable in my opinion ; and your princely father, is he rich, very rich ?"

"Yes, in truth ; he does not himself know the amount of his fortune."

"Is it possible ?"—"It is evident enough to me, who am always at his house. The other day a banker's clerk brought him fifty thousand francs in a portfolio about the size of your plate ; yesterday his banker brought him a hundred thousand francs in gold." Caderousse was filled with wonder ; the young man's words sounded to him like metal ; and he thought he could hear the rushing of cascades of louis. "And you go into that house ?" cried he briskly.—"When I like."

Caderousse was thoughtful for a moment. It was easy to perceive he was revolving some important idea in his mind. Then suddenly,—"How I should like to see all that !" cried he ; "how beautiful it must be !"—

"It is, in fact, magnificent," said Andrea.

"And does he not live in the Champs-Élysées ?"

"Yes, No. 30."—"Ah !" said Caderousse, "No. 30."

"Yes, a fine house standing alone, between a court-yard and a garden, you must know it."—"Possibly ; but it is not the exterior I care for, it is the interior : what beautiful furniture there must be in it !"

"Have you ever seen the Tuileries ?"—"No."

"Well, it surpasses that."—"It must be worth one's while to stoop, Andrea, when that good M. Monte-Cristo lets fall his purse."

"It is not worth while to wait for that," said Andrea ; "money is as plentiful in that house as fruit in an orchard."

"But you should take me there one day with you."

"How can I ? On what plea ?"

"You are right ; but you have made my mouth water ; I must absolutely see it ; I shall find a way."—"No nonsense, Caderousse !"

"I will offer myself as frotteur."—"The rooms are all carpeted."

"Well, then, I must be contented to imagine it."

"That is the best plan, believe me."

"Try, at least, to give me an idea of what it is."

"How can I ?"—"Nothing is easier. Is it large ?"

"Middling."—"How is it arranged ?"

"Faith, I should require pen, ink, and paper to make a plan."

"They are all here," said Caderousse, briskly. He fetched from an old secrétaire a sheet of white paper, and pen and ink. "Here," said Caderousse, "trace me all that on the paper, my boy." Andrea took the pen with an imperceptible smile, and began. "The house, as I said, is between the court and the garden ; in this way, do you see ?" Andrea traced the garden, the court, and the house.

"High walls ?"—"Not more than eight or ten feet."

"That is not prudent," said Caderousse.

"In the court are orange-trees in pots, turf, and clumps of flowers."

"And no steel-traps ?"—"No."

"The stables ?"—"Are on either side of the gate, which you see there."

And Andrea continued his plan. "Let us see the ground-floor," said Caderousse.

"On the ground-floor, dining-room, two drawing-rooms, billiard-room, staircase in the hall, and little back staircase."—"Windows ?"

"Magnificent windows, so beautiful, so large, that I believe a man of your size could pass through each frame."

"Why the devil have they any stairs with such windows?"

"Luxury has everything."—"But shutters?"

"Yes, but they are never used. That Count of Monte-Cristo is an original, who loves to look at the sky even at night."

"And where do the servants sleep?"—"Oh! they have a house to themselves. Picture to yourself a pretty coach-house at the right-hand side where the ladders are kept. Well! over that coach-house are the servants' rooms, with bells corresponding with the different apartments."

"Ah, *diable*! bells did you say?"—"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing! I only say they cost a load of money to hang; and what is the use of them, I should like to know?"

"There used to be a dog let loose in the yard at night; but it has been taken to the house at Auteuil, to that you went to, you know."

"Yes."—"I was saying to him only yesterday, 'You are imprudent, M. le Comte; for when you go to Auteuil, and take your servants, the house is left unprotected.' 'Well,' said he, 'what next?' 'Well, next, some day you will be robbed.'—"What did he answer?"

"He quietly said, 'What do I care if I am?'"

"Andrea, he has some *secrétaire* with a spring."

"How do you know?"—"Yes, which catches the thief in a trap and plays a tune. I was told there were such at the last exhibition."

"He has simply a mahogany *secrétaire*, in which the key is always kept."—"And he is not robbed?"

"No; his servants are all devoted to him."

"There ought to be some money in that *secrétaire*?"

"There may be. No one knows what there is."

"And where is it!"—"On the first floor."

"Sketch me the plan of that floor, as you have done of the ground-floor, my boy."—"That is very simple." Andrea took the pen. "On the first story, do you see, there is the anteroom and drawing-room; to the right of the drawing-room, a library and a study; to the left, a bedroom and a dressing-room. The famous *secrétaire* is in the dressing-room."

"Is there a window in the dressing-room?"—"Two, one here and one there." Andrea sketched two windows in the room, which formed an angle on the plan, and appeared a smaller square added to the long square of the bed-room. Caderousse became thoughtful. Does he often go to Auteuil?" added he.

"Two or three times a-week. To-morrow, for instance, he is going to spend the day and night there."—"Are you sure of it?"

"He has invited me to dine there."—"There is a life, for instance," said Caderousse; "a town-house and a country-house."

"That is what it is to be rich."—"And shall you dine there?"

"Probably."—"When you dine there, do you sleep there?"

"If I like; I am at home there." Caderousse looked at the young man, as if to get at the truth from the bottom of his heart. But Andrea drew a cigar-case from his pocket, took a Havannah, quietly lit it, and began smoking. "When do you want your five hundred francs?" said he to Caderousse.—"Now, if you have them." Andrea took five and twenty louis from his pocket.

"Yellow boys?" said Caderousse; "no, I thank you."

"Oh! you despise them."

"On the contrary, I esteem them; but will not have them."

"You can change them, idiot ; gold is worth five sous."

"Exactly ; and he who changes them will follow friend Caderousse, lay hands on him, and demand what farmers pay him their rent in gold. No nonsense, my good fellow ; silver simply, round coins with the head of some monarch or other on them. Anybody may possess a five-franc piece."—"But do you suppose I carry five hundred francs about with me ? I should want a porter."

"Well, leave them with your porter ; he is to be trusted ; I will call for them."—"To-day ?"

"No, to-morrow ; I shall not have time to-day."

"Well, to-morrow I will leave them when I go to Auteuil."

"May I depend on it ?"—"Certainly."

"Because I shall secure my housekeeper on the strength of it."

"Stop ! will that be all ? Eh ! And will you not torment me any more ?"—"Never." Caderousse had become so gloomy that Andrea feared he should be obliged to notice the change. He redoubled his gaiety and carelessness. "How sprightly you are !" said Caderousse ; "one would say you were already in possession of your property."

"No, unfortunately ; but when I do obtain it—"

"Well ?"—"I shall remember old friends, I only tell you that."

"Yes, since you have such a good memory."

"What do you want ? I thought you had ransomed me."

"I ? What an idea ! I, who am going to give you another piece of good advice."—"What is it ?"

"To leave behind you the diamond you have on your finger. We shall both get in trouble. You will ruin both yourself and me by your folly."

"How so ?" said Andrea.

"How ? You put on a livery ; you disguise yourself as a servant, and yet keep a diamond on your finger worth four or five thousand francs."

"You guess well."

"I know something of diamonds ; I have had some."

"You do well to boast of it," said Andrea, who, without becoming angry, as Caderousse feared, at this new extortion, quietly resigned the ring. Caderousse looked so closely at it that Andrea well knew that he was examining if all the edges were perfect.

"It is a false diamond," said Caderousse.

"You are joking now," replied Andrea.

"Do not be angry ; we can try it." Caderousse went to the window, touched the glass with it, and found it would cut.

"*Confiteor !*" said Caderousse, putting the diamond on his little finger ; "I was mistaken ; but those thieves of jewellers imitate so well that it is no longer worth while to rob a jeweller's shop—it is another branch of industry paralysed."

"Have you finished now ?" said Andrea,—"do you want anything more ?—will you have my waistcoat or my certificate ? Make free now you have begun."

"No ; you are, after all, a good companion ; I will not detain you, and will try to cure myself of my ambition."

"But take care the same thing does not happen to you in selling the diamond you feared with the gold."

"I shall not sell it—do not fear it."

"Not at least till the day after to-morrow," thought the young man.

"Happy rogue !" said Caderousse ; "you are going to find your servants, your horses, your carriage, and your betrothed !"

"Yes," said Andrea. "Well, I hope you will make a handsome wedding-present the day you marry Mademoiselle Danglars."

"I have already told you it is a fancy you have taken in your head."

"What fortune has she?"—"But I tell you——"

"A million?" Andrea shrugged up his shoulders.

"Let it be a million," said Caderousse; "you can never have so much as I wish you."—"Thank you," said the young man.

"Oh, I wish it you with all my heart!" added Caderousse, with his hoarse laugh. "Stop, let me show you the way."

"It is not worth while."—"Yes, it is."

"Why?"—"Because there is a little secret, a precaution I thought it desirable to take, one of Huret and Fichet's locks, revised and improved by Gaspard Caderousse; I will manufacture you a similar one when you are a capitalist."

"Thank you," said Andrea; "I will let you know a week beforehand." They parted. Caderousse remained on the landing until he had not only seen Andrea go down the three stories, but also cross the court. Then he returned hastily, shut his door carefully, and began to study, like a clever architect, the plan Andrea had left him.

"Dear Benedetto," said he, "I think he will not be sorry to inherit his fortune, and he who hastens the day when he can touch his five hundred thousand will not be his worst friend."

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THE BURGLARY.

THE day following that on which the conversation we have related took place, the count of Monte-Cristo set out for Auteuil, accompanied by Ali and several attendants, and also taking with him some horses whose qualities he was desirous of ascertaining. He was induced to undertake this journey, of which the day before he had not even thought, and which had not either occurred to Andrea, by the arrival of Bertuccio from Normandy, with intelligence respecting the house and sloop. The house was ready, and the sloop, which had arrived a week before, lay at anchor in a small creek, with her crew of six men, who, after having observed all the requisite formalities, were ready again to put to sea. The count praised Bertuccio's zeal, and ordered him to prepare for a speedy departure, as his stay in France would not be prolonged more than a month. "Now," said he, "I may require to go in one night from Paris to Trépot; let eight fresh horses be in readiness on the road, which will enable me to go fifty leagues in ten hours."—"Your highness had already expressed that wish," said Bertuccio, "and the horses are ready. I have bought them, and stationed them myself at the most desirable posts, namely, in villages, where no one generally stops."—"That's well," said Monte-Cristo; "I remain here a day or two, arrange accordingly." As Bertuccio was leaving the room to give the requisite orders, Baptistin opened the door: he held a letter on a silver waiter.—"What do you do here?" asked the count, seeing him covered with dust; "I did not send for you, I think?"

Baptistin, without answering, approached the count, and presented the letter. "Important and urgent," said he. The count opened the letter, and read:—

"M. de Monte-Cristo is apprised that this night a man will enter his

house in the Champs-Élysées with the intention of carrying off some papers supposed to be in the secrétaire in the dressing-room. The count's well-known courage will render unnecessary the aid of the police, whose interference might seriously affect him who sends this advice. The count, by any opening from the bed-room, or by concealing himself in the dressing-room, would be able to defend his property himself. Many attendants or apparent precautions would prevent the villain from the attempt, and M. de Monte-Cristo would lose the opportunity of discovering an enemy whom chance has revealed to him who now sends this warning to the count,—a warning he might not be able to send another time, if this first attempt should fail and another be made."

The count's first idea was that this was an artifice—a gross deception, to draw his attention from a minor danger in order to expose him to a greater. He was on the point of sending the letter to the commissaire de police, notwithstanding the advice of his anonymous friend, or, perhaps, *because* of that advice, when suddenly the idea occurred to him that it might be some personal enemy, whom he alone should recognise, and over whom, if such were the case, he alone could gain any advantage, as Fiesque had done over the Moor who would have killed him. We know the count's vigorous and daring mind, denying anything to be impossible, with that energy which marks the great man. From his past life, from his resolution to shrink from nothing, the count had acquired an inconceivable relish for the contests in which he had engaged, sometimes against nature, sometimes against the world, which may pass for the devil.

"They do not want my papers," said Monte-Cristo; "they want to kill me: they are no robbers, but assassins. I will not allow M. le Préfet de Police to interfere with my private affairs. I am rich enough, forsooth, to dispute his authority on this occasion." The count recalled Baptistin, who had left the room after delivering the letter. "Return to Paris," said he; "assemble the servants who remain there. I want all my household at Auteuil."—"But will no one remain in the house, my lord?" asked Baptistin.—"Yes, the porter."

"My lord will remember that the lodge is at a distance from the house."

"Well?"

"The house might be stripped without his hearing the least noise."

"By whom?"—"By thieves."

"You are a fool, M. Baptistin! Thieves might strip the house—it would annoy me less than to be disobeyed." Baptistin bowed.

"You understand me?" said the count. "Bring your comrades here, one and all; but let everything remain as usual, only close the shutters of the ground-floor."—"And those of the first-floor?"

"You know they are never closed. Go!"

The count signified his intention of dining alone, and that no one but Ali should attend him. Having dined with his usual tranquillity and moderation, the count, making a signal to Ali to follow him, went out by the side-gate, and, on reaching the Bois de Boulogne, turned, apparently without design, towards Paris, and at twilight found himself opposite his house in the Champs-Élysées. All was dark; one solitary, feeble light was burning in the porter's lodge, about forty paces distant from the house, as Baptistin had said. Monte-Cristo leant against a tree, and, with that eye which was so rarely deceived, searched the double avenue, examined the passers-by, and carefully looked down the neighbouring streets, to see that no one was concealed. Ten minutes passed thus, and he was con-

vinced no one was watching him. He hastened to the side-door with Ali, entered precipitately, and by the servants' staircase, of which he had the key, gained his bedroom without opening or disarranging a single curtain, without even the porter having the slightest suspicion that the house, which he supposed empty, contained its chief occupant.

Arrived in his bedroom, the count motioned to Ali to stop; then he passed into the dressing-room, which he examined: all was as usual—the precious *secrétaire* in its place, and the key in the *secrétaire*. He doubly locked it, took the key, returned to the bedroom-door, removed the double staple of the bolt, and went in. Meanwhile Ali had procured the arms the count required—namely, a short carbine and a pair of double-barrelled pistols, with which as sure an aim might be taken as with a single-barrelled one. Thus armed, the count held the lives of five men in his hands. It was about half-past nine. The count and Ali ate in haste a crust of bread and drank a glass of Spanish wine; then Monte-Cristo slipped aside one of the movable panels, which enabled him to see into the adjoining room. He had within his reach his pistols and carbine, and Ali, standing near him, held one of those small Arabian hatchets, whose form has not varied since the crusades. Through one of the windows of the bedroom, on a line with that in the dressing-room, the count could see into the street. Two hours passed thus. It was intensely dark: still Ali, thanks to his wild nature, and the count, thanks, doubtless, to his long confinement, could distinguish in the darkness the slightest movement of the trees. The little light in the lodge had been long extinct. It might be expected that the attack, if indeed an attack was projected, would be made from the staircase of the ground-floor, and not from a window: in Monte-Cristo's idea, the villains sought his life, not his money. It would be his bedroom they would attack, and they must reach it by the back staircase, or by the window in the dressing-room. The clock of the Invalides struck a quarter to twelve: the west wind bore on its moistened gush the doleful vibration of the three strokes. As the last stroke died away, the count thought he heard a slight noise in the dressing-room: this first sound, or rather this first grinding, was followed by a second, then a third; at the fourth, the count knew what to expect. A firm and well-practised hand was engaged in cutting the four sides of a pane of glass with a diamond. The count felt his heart beat more rapidly. Inured as men may be to danger, forewarned as they may be of peril, they understand, by the fluttering of the heart and the shuddering of the frame, the enormous difference between a dream and a reality, between the project and the execution. However, Monte-Cristo only made a sign to apprise Ali, who, understanding that danger was approaching from the other side, drew nearer to his master. Monte-Cristo was eager to ascertain the strength and number of his enemies.

The window whence the noise proceeded was opposite the opening by which the count could see into the dressing-room. He fixed his eyes on that window—he distinguished a shadow in the darkness; then one of the panes became quite opaque, as if a sheet of paper were stuck on the outside, then the square cracked without falling. Through the opening an arm was passed to find the fastening, then a second; the window turned on its hinges, and a man entered. He was alone.

"That's a daring rascal!" whispered the count.

At that moment Ali touched him slightly on the shoulder. He turned; Ali pointed to the window of the room in which they were, facing the street. "Good!" said he, "there are two of them; one acts while the

other watches." He made a sign to Ali not to lose sight of the man in the street, and returned to the one in the dressing-room.

The glass-cutter had entered, and was feeling his way, his arms stretched out before him. At last he appeared to have made himself familiar with all parts. There were two doors ; he bolted them both.

When he drew near to that of the bedroom, Monte-Cristo expected he was coming in, and raised one of his pistols ; but he simply heard the sound of the bolts sliding in their copper rings. It was only a precaution. The nocturnal visitor, ignorant of the count's having removed the staples, might now think himself at home, and pursue his purpose with full security. Alone and uncontrolled, the man then drew from his pocket something which the count could not discern, placed it on a stand, then went straight to the secrétaire, felt the lock, and, contrary to his expectation, found that the key was missing. But the glass-cutter was a prudent man, who had provided for all emergencies. The count soon heard the rattling of a bunch of shapeless keys, such as the locksmith brings when called to force a lock, and which thieves call nightingales, doubtless from the music of their nightly song when they turn the precious lock. "Ah, ah !" whispered Monte-Cristo, with a smile of disappointment, "he is only a thief !"

But the man in the dark could not find the right key. He reached the instrument he had placed on the stand, touched a spring, and immediately a pale light, just bright enough to render objects distinct, was reflected on the hands and countenance of the man. "Hold !" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, starting back, "it is——"

Ali raised his hatchet. "Don't stir," whispered Monte-Cristo, "and put down your hatchet ; we shall require no arms." Then he added some words in a low tone, for the exclamation which surprise had drawn from the count, weak as it had been, had startled the man, who remained in the position of the old grinder. It was an order the count had just given, for immediately Ali went noiselessly, and returned, bearing a black dress and a three-cornered hat. Meanwhile Monte-Cristo had rapidly taken off his great-coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and one might distinguish by the glimmering through the open panel that he wore one of those pliant tunics of steel mail, of which the last in France, where daggers are no longer feared, was worn by King Louis XVI., who feared the dagger at his breast, and whose head was cleft with a hatchet. This tunic soon disappeared under a long cassock, as did his hair under a priest's wig ; the three-cornered hat over this effectually transformed the count into an abbé.

The man, hearing nothing more, had again raised himself, and, while Monte-Cristo was completing his disguise, had advanced straight to the secrétaire, whose lock was beginning to crack under his nightingale.

"Well done !" whispered the count, who depended on the secret spring, which was unknown to the picklock, clever as he might be—"well done ! you have a few minutes' work there." And he advanced to the window. The man whom he had seen seated on a fence had got down, and was still pacing the street ; but, strange as it appeared, he cared not for those who might pass from the avenue of the Champs-Élysées or by the Faubourg St. Honoré ; his attention was engrossed with what was passing at the count's, and his only aim appeared to be to discern every movement in the dressing-room.

Monte-Cristo suddenly struck his finger on his forehead, and a smile passed over his lips ; then drawing near to Ali, he whispered :

"Remain here, concealed in the dark, and whatever noise you hear, whatever passes, only come in or show yourself if I call you." Ali bowed

in token of strict obedience. Monte-Cristo then drew a lighted taper from a closet, and when the thief was deeply engaged with his lock, silently opened the door, taking care that the light should shine directly on his face. The door opened so quietly that the thief heard no sound; but, to his astonishment, the room was in a moment light. He turned.

"Good evening, dear M. Caderousse!" said Monte-Cristo; "what are you doing here at such an hour?"—"The Abbé Busoni!" exclaimed Caderousse; and, not knowing how this strange apparition could have entered when he had bolted the doors, he let fall his bunch of keys, and remained motionless and stupefied. The count placed himself between Caderousse and the window, thus cutting off from the thief his only chance of retreat. "The Abbé Busoni!" repeated Caderousse, fixing his haggard gaze on the count.

"Yes, doubtless, the Abbé Busoni himself!" replied Monte-Cristo. "And I am very glad you recognise me, dear M. Caderousse; it proves you have a good memory, for it must be about ten years since we last met." This calmness of Busoni, combined with his irony and boldness, staggered Caderousse.—"L'abbé, l'abbé!" murmured he, clenching his fists, and his teeth chattering.

"So you would rob the Count of Monte-Cristo?" continued the false abbé.—"M. l'Abbé," murmured Caderousse, seeking to regain the window, which the count pitilessly intercepted—"M. l'Abbé, I don't know—believe me—I take my oath—"

"A pane of glass out," continued the count, "a dark lantern, a bunch of false keys, a secrétaire half forced—it is tolerably evident—"

Caderousse was choking; he looked round for some corner to hide in—some way of escape. "Come, come," continued the count, "I see you are still the same—an assassin."—"M. l'Abbé, since you know everything, you know it was not I—it was La Carconte; that was proved at the trial, since I was only condemned to the galleys."—"Is your time, then, expired, since I find you in a fair way to return there?"

"No, M. l'Abbé, I have been liberated by some one."

"That some one has done society a great kindness."

"Ah," said Caderousse, "I had promised—"

"And you are breaking your promise!" interrupted Monte-Cristo.

"Alas, yes!" said Caderousse, very uneasily.

"A bad relapse, that will lead you, if I mistake not, to the Place de Grève. So much the worse, so much the worse—*diavolo!* as they say in my country."—"M. l'Abbé, I am impelled—"

"Every criminal says the same thing."—"Poverty—"

"Pshaw!" said Busoni, disdainfully; "poverty may make a man beg, steal a loaf of bread at a baker's door, but not cause him to open a secrétaire in a house supposed to be inhabited. And when the jeweller Johannes had just paid you 45,000 francs for the diamond I had given you, and you killed him to get the diamond and the money both, was that also poverty?"

"Pardon, M. l'Abbé!" said Caderousse; "you have saved my life once, save me again!"—"That is but poor encouragement."

"Are you alone, M. l'Abbé, or have you there soldiers ready to seize me?"—"I am alone," said the abbé, "and I will again have pity on you and will let you escape, at the risk of the fresh miseries my weakness may lead to, if you tell me the truth."

"Ah, M. l'Abbé," cried Caderousse, clasping his hands, and drawing nearer to Monte-Cristo, "I may indeed say you are my deliverer!"

"You mean to say you have been freed from confinement?"

"Yes, in truth, M. l'Abbé."—"Who was your liberator?"

"An Englishman."—"What was his name?"

"Lord Wilmore."—"I know him; I shall know if you lie."

"M. l'Abbé, I tell you the simple truth."

"Was this Englishman protecting you?"

"No, not me, but a young Corsican, my companion."

"What was this young Corsican's name?"—"Benedetto."

"Is that his Christian name?"—"He had no other; he was a foundling."—"Then this young man escaped with you?"—"He did."

"In what way?"—"We were working at St. Mandrier, near Toulon. Do you know St. Mandrier?"—"I do."

"In the hour of rest, between noon and one o'clock——"

"Galley-slaves having a nap after dinner! We may well pity the poor fellows!" said the abbé.

"Nay," said Caderousse, "one can't always work—one is not a dog!"

"So much the better for the dogs!" said Monte-Cristo.

"While the rest slept, then, we went away a short distance; we severed our fetters with a file the Englishman had given us, and swam away."—"

And what is become of this Benedetto?"

"I don't know."—"You ought to know."

"No, in truth; we parted at Hyères." And to give more weight to his protestation, Caderousse advanced another step towards the abbé, who remained motionless in his place, as calm as ever, and pursuing his interrogation. "You lie!" said the Abbé Busoni, with a tone of irresistible authority.

"M. l'Abbé!"—"You lie! This man is still your friend, and you, perhaps, make use of him as your accomplice."

"Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé!"—"Since you left Toulon what have you lived on? Answer me!"—"On what I could get."

"You lie!" repeated the abbé, a third time, with a still more imperative tone. Caderousse, terrified, looked at the count. "You have lived on the money he has given you."—"True!" said Caderousse; "Benedetto has become the son of a great lord."

"How can he be the son of a great lord?"—"A natural son."

"And what is that great lord's name?"

"The count of Monte-Cristo, the very same in whose house we are."

"Benedetto the count's son!" replied Monte-Cristo, astonished in his turn.—"Forsooth! I suppose so, since the count has found him a false father—since the count gives him four thousand francs a month, and leaves him 500,000 francs in his will."

"Ah! ah!" said the false abbé, who began to understand; "and what name does the young man bear meanwhile?"—"Andrea Cavalcanti."

"Is it, then, that young man whom my friend the count of Monte-Cristo has received into his house, and who is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?"—"Exactly."

"And you suffer that, you wretch!—you, who know his life and his crime?"—"Why should I stand in a comrade's way?" said Caderousse.

"You are right; it is not you who should apprise M. Danglars, it is I."

"Do not do so, M. l'Abbé."

"Why not?"—"Because you would bring us to ruin."

"And you think that to save such villains as you I will become an abettor of their plot—an accomplice in their crimes?"

"M. l'Abbé," said Caderousse, drawing still nearer.

"I will expose all."—"To whom?"

"To M. Danglars."—"By Heaven!" cried Caderousse, drawing from his waistcoat an open knife, and striking the count in the breast, "you shall disclose nothing, M. l'Abbé!" To Caderousse's great astonishment, the knife, instead of piercing the count's breast, flew back blunted. At the same moment the count seized with his left hand the assassin's wrist, and wrung it with such strength that the knife fell from his stiffened fingers, and Caderousse uttered a cry of pain. But the count, disregarding his cry, continued to wring the bandit's wrist, until, his arm being dislocated, he fell first on his knees, then flat on the floor. The count then placed his foot on his head, saying, "I know not what restrains me from crushing thy skull, rascal!"

"Ah, mercy—mercy!" cried Caderousse. The count withdrew his foot. "Rise!" said he. Caderousse rose.

"What a wrist you have, M. l'Abbé!" said Caderousse, stroking his arm, all bruised by the fleshy pincers which had held it—"what a wrist!"—"Silence! God gives me strength to overcome a wild beast like you; in the name of that God I act—remember that, wretch!—and to spare thee at this moment is still serving Him."

"Oh!" said Caderousse, groaning with pain.

"Take this pen and paper, and write what I dictate."

"I don't know how to write, M. l'Abbé."

"You lie! Take this pen, and write!" Caderousse, awed by the superior power of the abbé, sat down and wrote:

"SIR,—The man whom you are receiving at your house, and to whom you intend to marry your daughter, is a felon who escaped with me from confinement at Toulon. He was No. 59, and I No. 58. He was called Benedetto; but he is ignorant of his real name, having never known his parents."

"Sign it!" continued the count.

"But would you ruin me!"—"If I sought your ruin, fool, I should drag you to the first guard-house; besides, when that note is delivered, in all probability you will have no more to fear. Sign it, then!"

Caderousse signed it. "The address, 'A Monsieur le Baron Danglars, banker, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin.'" Caderousse wrote the address. The abbé took the note. "Now," said he, "that suffices—begone!"

"Which way?"—"The way you came."—"You wish me to get out at that window?"—"You got in very well."

"Oh! you have some design against me, M. l'Abbé."—"Idiot! what design can I have?"—"Why, then, not let me out by the door?"

"What would be the advantage of waking the porter?"—"M. l'Abbé, tell me, do you not wish me dead?"—"I wish what God wills."

"But swear that you will not strike me as I go down."

"Cowardly fool!"—"What do you intend doing with me?"

"I ask you what can I do? I have tried to make you a happy man, and you have turned out a murderer."—"M. l'Abbé," said Caderousse, "make one more attempt—try me once more!"—"I will," said the count. "Listen!—you know if I may be relied on."

"Yes," said Caderousse.—"If you arrive safely at home——"

"What have I to fear, except from you?"—"If you reach your home safely, leave Paris, leave France; and wherever you may be, so long as you conduct yourself well, I will send you a small annuity; for, if you return home safely, then——"

"Then?" asked Caderousse, shuddering.

"Then I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you too."

—"As true as I am a Christian," stammered Caderousse, "you will make me die of fright!"

"Now, begone!" said the count, pointing to the window.

Caderousse, scarcely yet relying on this promise, put his legs out of the window and stood on the ladder. "Now go down," said the abbé, folding his arms. Understanding he had nothing more to fear from him, Caderousse began to go down. Then the count brought the taper to the window, that it might be seen in the Champs-Élysées that a man was getting out of the window while another held a light.—"What are you doing, M. l'Abbé? Suppose a watchman should pass?" And he blew out the light. He then descended, but it was only when he felt his foot touch the ground that he was satisfied he was safe.

Monte-Cristo returned to his bedroom, and glancing rapidly from the garden to the street, he saw first Caderousse, who, after walking to the end of the garden, fixed his ladder against the wall at a different part from where he came in. The count then, looking over into the street, saw the man who appeared to be waiting run in the same direction, and place himself against the angle of the wall where Caderousse would come over. Caderousse climbed the ladder slowly, and looked over the coping to see if the street was quiet. No one could be seen or heard. The clock of the Invalides struck one. Then Caderousse sat astride the coping, and, drawing up his ladder, passed it over the wall; then began to descend, or rather to slide down by the two stanchions, which he did with an ease which proved how accustomed he was to the exercise. But, once started, he could not stop. In vain did he see a man start from the shade when he was half-way down—in vain did he see an arm raised as he touched the ground. Before he could defend himself that arm struck him so violently in the back that he let go the ladder, crying, "Help!" A second blow struck him almost immediately in the side, and he fell, calling, "Help! murder!" Then, as he rolled on the ground, his adversary seized him by the hair, and struck him a third blow in the chest. This time Caderousse endeavoured to call again, but he could only utter a groan, and he shuddered as the blood flowed from his three wounds. The assassin, finding he no longer cried, lifted his head up by the hair; his eyes were closed, and mouth distorted. The murderer, supposing him dead, let fall his head and disappeared. Then Caderousse, feeling that he was leaving him, raised himself on his elbow, and, with a dying voice, cried, with great effort, "Murder! I am dying! Help, M. l'Abbé—help!"

This mournful appeal pierced the darkness. The door of the back-staircase opened, then the side-gate of the garden, and Ali and his master were on the spot with lights.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

THE HAND OF GOD.

CADEROUSSE continued to call piteously, "M. l'Abbé, help! help!"

"What is the matter?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Help!" cried Caderousse; "I am murdered!"

"We are here;—take courage!"

"Ah, it's all over! You are come too late;—you are come to see me die. What blows! what blood!" He fainted. Ali and his master con-

veyed the wounded man into a room. Monte-Cristo motioned to Ali to undress him, and he then examined his dreadful wounds. "My God!" he exclaimed, "Thy vengeance is sometimes delayed, but only that it may fall the more effectually." Ali looked at his master for further instructions. "Conduct here immediately the *procureur du roi*, M. de Villefort, who lives in the Faubourg St. Honoré. As you pass the lodge, wake the porter, and send him for a surgeon." Ali obeyed, leaving the abbé alone with Caderousse, who had not yet revived.

When the wretched man again opened his eyes, the count looked at him with a mournful expression of pity, and his lips moved as if in prayer. "A surgeon, M. l'Abbé—a surgeon!" said Caderousse.

"I have sent for one," replied the abbé.

"I know he cannot save my life, but he may strengthen me to give my evidence."—"Against whom?"—"Against my murderer."

"Did you recognise him?"—"Yes—it was Benedetto."

"The young Corsican?"—"Himself."—"Your comrade?"

"Yes. After giving me the plan of this house, doubtless hoping I should kill the count and he thus become his heir, or that the count would kill me and I should be out of his way, he waylaid me, and has murdered me."—"I have also sent for the *procureur du roi*."

"He will not come in time; I feel my life fast ebbing."

"Stop!" said Monte-Cristo. He left the room, and returned in five minutes with a phial. The dying man's eyes were all the time riveted on the door, through which he hoped succour would arrive. "Hasten, M. l'Abbé!—hasten! I shall faint again!" Monte-Cristo approached, and dropped on his purple lips three or four drops of the contents of the phial. Caderousse drew a deep breath. "Oh!" said he, "that is life to me; more, more!"

"Two drops more would kill you," replied the abbé.

"Oh, send for some one to whom I can denounce the wretch!"

"Shall I write your deposition? You can sign it."—"Yes, yes," said Caderousse; and his eyes glistened at the thought of this posthumous revenge. Monte-Cristo wrote:

"I die murdered by the Corsican Benedetto, my comrade in the galleys at Toulouse, No. 59."

"Quick, quick!" said Caderousse, "or I shall be unable to sign it."

Monte-Cristo gave the pen to Caderousse, who collected all his strength, signed it, and fell back on the bed, saying: "You will relate all the rest, M. l'Abbé; you will say he calls himself Andrea Cavalcanti. He lodges at the Hôtel des Princes. Oh, I am dying!" He again fainted. The abbé made him smell the contents of the phial, and he again opened his eyes. His desire for revenge had not forsaken him.

"Ah! you will tell all I have said: will you not, M. l'Abbé?"

"Yes, and much more."—"What more will you say?"

"I will say he had doubtless given you the plan of this house, in the hope the count would kill you. I will say, likewise, he had apprised the count, by a note, of your intention; and, the count being absent, I read the note, and sat up to await you."

"And he will be guillotined, will he not?" said Caderousse. "Promise me that, and I will die with that hope."

"I will say," continued the count, "that he followed and watched you the whole time, and when he saw you leave the house, ran to the angle of the wall to conceal himself."—"Did you see all that?"

"Remember my words : 'If you return home safely, I shall believe God has forgiven you, and I will forgive you also.'"

"And you did not warn me!" cried Caderousse, raising himself on his elbows. "You knew I should be killed on leaving this house, and did not warn me!"—"No, for I saw God's justice placed in the hands of Benedetto, and should have thought it sacrilege to oppose the designs of Providence."

"God's justice ! Speak not of it, M. l'Abbé. If God were just, you know many would be punished who now escape."—"Patience !" said the abbé, in a tone which made the dying man shudder—"have patience !" Caderousse looked at him with amazement. "Besides," said the abbé, "God is merciful to all, as He has been to you ; He is first a father, then a judge."—"Do you then believe in God?" said Caderousse.—"Had I been so unhappy and not to believe in Him until now," said Monte-Cristo, "I must believe on seeing you."

Caderousse raised his clenched hands towards heaven.

"Listen," said the abbé, extending his hand over the wounded man, as if to command him to believe ; "this is what the God in whom, on your death-bed, you refuse to believe, has done for you : he gave you health, strength, regular employment, even friends—a life, in fact, which a man might enjoy with a calm conscience. Instead of improving these gifts, rarely granted so abundantly, this has been your course : you have given yourself up to sloth and drunkenness, and in a fit of intoxication have ruined your best friend."—"Help !" cried Caderousse, "I require a surgeon, not a priest ; perhaps I am not mortally wounded—I may not die ; perhaps they can yet save my life."

"Your wounds are so far mortal, that without the three drops I gave you, you would now be dead. Listen, then."—"Ah !" murmured Caderousse, "what a strange priest you are ! you drive the dying to despair, instead of consoling them."

"Listen," continued the abbé. "When you had betrayed your friend God began not to strike, but to warn you : poverty overtook you ; you had already passed half your life in coveting that which you might have honourably acquired, and already you contemplated crime under the excuse of want, when God worked a miracle in your behalf, sending you, by my hands, a fortune—brilliant, indeed, for you, who had never possessed any. But this unexpected, un hoped-for, unheard-of fortune sufficed you no longer when you once possessed it ; you wished to double it ; and how ?—by a murder ! You succeeded, and then God snatched it from you, and brought you to justice."

"It was not I who wished to kill the Jew," said Caderousse ; "it was La Carconte."—"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "and God, I cannot say, in justice, for His justice would have slain you—but God, in His mercy, spared your life."

"*Pardieu !* to transport me for life ; how merciful !"

"You thought it a mercy then, miserable wretch ! The coward, who feared death, rejoiced at perpetual disgrace, for, like all galley-slaves, you said, 'I may escape from prison, I cannot from the grave.' And you said truly ; the way was opened for you unexpectedly : an Englishman visited Toulon, who had vowed to rescue two men from infamy, and his choice fell on you and your companion ; you received a second fortune, money and tranquillity were restored to you ; and you, who had been condemned to a felon's life, might live as other men : then, wretched creature ! then you tempted God a third time. 'I have not enough,' you said, when you

the sword from its sheath, or the pistols from the scabbard, if you please."

"Three weeks!" cried Albert; "they will pass as centuries when I am all the time suffering dishonour."—"You are to remain on amicable terms with me, I should have said to my friend;" but you have constituted yourself my enemy. "What does that signify to me, sir?"—"Well, let us see," said Morcerf; "but remember, at the expiration of three weeks delay or subterfuge will justify you in—"

"M. Albert de Morcerf," said Beauchamp, rising in his seat, "I will throw you out of window for three weeks—that is to say, three days to come—nor have you any right to split my skull open till the days have elapsed. To-day is the 29th of August; the 21st of September is therefore, be the conclusion of the term agreed on, and till then we will refrain from growling and barking like two dogs within sight of each other." When he had concluded this, Beauchamp bowed coldly to Albert, turned his back upon him, and returned to his printing-office. Albert vented his anger on a pile of newspapers which he sent flying all over the room by switching them violently with a stick, after which ebullition he departed—not, however, without sometimes stopping at the door of the printing-office, as if he had half a mind to go in. Whilst Albert was lashing the front of his chariot in the same way, he had done to the newspapers which were the innocent agents of his confinement, as he was crossing the barrier he perceived Morcerf walking with a quick step and a bright eye. He was passing the Rue de la Harpe, and appeared to have come from the direction of the Rue de la Martinie, and to be going towards the Magdalen. "Ah," said Beauchamp, "there goes a happy man!" And Albert was not mistaken in his

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE LEMONADE.

MORREL was, in fact, very happy. M. Noirtier had just sent him word that he was in such haste to know the reason of his doing so that he stopped to take a *fiacre*, placing infinitely more dependence on the two legs than on the four legs of a cab-horse. He had, therefore, started at a furious rate from the Rue Meslay, and was hastening in long strides in the direction of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Morrel, with a firm, manly tread, and poor Barrois followed him as usual. Morrel was only thirty-one, Barrois was sixty years of age; Morrel was deeply in love, and Barrois was dying with heat and exertion; men, thus opposed in age and interests, resembled two parts of a machine presenting the extremes of separation, yet nevertheless presenting a point of union. This point of union was Noirtier, and it was he who had just sent for Morrel, with the request that he would lose no time in coming to him—a command which Morrel obeyed to the letter, to the great comfort of Barrois. On arriving at the house, Morrel was out of breath, for love lends wings to our desires; but Barrois, who had forgotten what it was to love, was sorely fatigued by the exertion of having been constrained to use.

The old servant introduced Morrel by a private entrance into the door of the study, and soon the rustling of a dress announced the

them with a desperate effort,—“Oh ! my God ! my God !” said he, “pardon me for having denied Thee ; Thou dost exist : Thou art, indeed, man’s father in heaven, and his judge on earth. My God, my Lord, I have long despised Thee ! Pardon me, my God ; receive me, O my Lord !” Caderousse sighed deeply, and fell back with a groan. The blood no longer flowed from his wounds. He was dead.

“*One !*” said the count, mysteriously, his eyes fixed on the corpse, disfigured by so awful a death. Ten minutes afterwards the surgeon and the procureur du roi arrived ; the one accompanied by the porter, the other by Ali, and were received by the Abbé Busoni, who was praying by the side of the corpse.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

BEAUCHAMP.

THE daring attempt to rob the count was the topic of conversation throughout Paris for the next fortnight : the dying man had signed a deposition declaring Benedetto to be the assassin. The police had orders to make the strictest search for the murderer. Caderousse’s knife, dark lantern, bunch of keys, and clothing, excepting the waistcoat, which could not be found, were deposited at the registry ; the corpse was conveyed to La Morgue. The count told every one this adventure had happened during his absence at Auteuil, and that he only knew what was related by the Abbé Busoni, who that evening, by mere chance, had requested to pass the night in his house to examine some valuable books in his library. Bertuccio alone turned pale whenever Benedetto’s name was mentioned in his presence : but there was no reason why any one should notice his doing so. Villefort, being called on to prove the crime, was preparing the *breviate* with the same ardour as he was accustomed to exercise when called on to speak in criminal cases.

But three weeks had already passed, and the most diligent search had been unsuccessful ; the attempted robbery and the murder of the robber by his comrade were almost forgotten in anticipation of the approaching marriage of Mademoiselle Danglars to the Count Andrea Cavalcanti. It was expected this wedding would shortly take place, as the young man was received at the banker’s as the betrothed. Letters had been despatched to M. Cavalcanti, as the count’s father, who highly approved of the union, regretted his inability to leave Parma at that time, and promised a wedding gift of a hundred and fifty thousand livres. It was agreed that the three millions should be intrusted to Danglars to improve ; some persons had warned the young man of the circumstances of his future father-in-law, who had of late sustained repeated losses, but with sublime disinterestedness and confidence the young man refused to listen, or to express a single doubt to the baron. The baron adored Count Andrea Cavalcanti ; not so Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars. With an instinctive hatred of matrimony, she suffered Andrea’s attentions in order to get rid of Morcerf ; but when Andrea urged his suit, she betrayed an entire dislike to him. The baron might possibly have perceived it, but attributing it to caprice, feigned ignorance.

The delay demanded by Beauchamp had nearly expired. Morcerf appreciated the advice of Monte-Cristo to let things die away of their own accord ; no one had taken up the remark about the general, and no one had recognised in the officer who betrayed the castle of Yanina the noble

count in the House of Peers. Albert, however, felt no less insulted; the few lines which had irritated him were certainly intended as an insult. Besides, the manner in which Beauchamp had closed the conference left a bitter recollection in his heart. He cherished the thought of the duel, hoping to conceal its true cause even from his seconds. Beauchamp had not been seen since the day he visited Albert; and those of whom the latter inquired always told him he was out on a journey which would detain him some days. Where he was no one knew. One morning Albert was awoke by his valet-de-chambre, who announced Beauchamp. Albert rubbed his eyes, ordered his servant to introduce him into the small smoking-room on the ground-floor, dressed himself quickly, and went down. He found Beauchamp pacing the room: on perceiving him Beauchamp stopped. "Your arrival here, without waiting my visit at your house to-day looks well, sir," said Albert. "Tell me, may I shake hands with you? saying, 'Beauchamp, acknowledge you have injured me, and retain my friendship,' or must I simply propose to you a choice of arms?"

"Albert," said Beauchamp, with a look of sorrow which stupefied the young man, "let us first sit down and talk."

"Rather, sir, before we sit down, I must demand your answer."

"Albert," said the journalist, "these are questions which it is difficult to answer."—"I will facilitate it by repeating the question, 'Will you, or will you not, retract?'"

"Morcerf, it is not enough to answer Yes or No to questions which concern the honour, the social interest, and the life of such a man as the Lieutenant-general Count de Morcerf, peer of France."

"What must then be done?"

"What I have done, Albert. I reasoned thus: Money, time, and fatigue are nothing compared with the reputation and interests of a whole family; probabilities will not suffice, only facts will justify a deadly combat with a friend: if I strike with the sword, or discharge the contents of a pistol at a man with whom, for three years, I have been on terms of intimacy, I must, at least, know why I do so; I must meet him with a heart at ease, and that quiet conscience which a man needs when his own arm must save his life."

"Well," asked Morcerf, impatiently, "what does all this mean?"

"It means that I have just returned from Yanina."

"From Yanina?"—"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"Here is my passport; examine the *vista*—Geneva, Milan, Venice, Trieste, Delvino, Yanina. Will you believe the government of a republic, a kingdom, and an empire?" Albert cast his eyes on the passport, then raised them in astonishment to Beauchamp. "You have been to Yanina?" said he.

"Albert, had you been a stranger, a foreigner, a simple lord, like that Englishman who came to demand satisfaction three or four months since, and whom I killed to get rid of, I should not have taken this trouble; but I thought this mark of consideration due to you. I took a week to go, another to return, four days of quarantine, and forty-eight hours to stay there; that makes three weeks. I returned last night; and here I am."

"What circumlocution!—How long you are before you tell me what I most wish to know!"—"Because, in truth, Albert—"

"You hesitate!"—"Yes,—I fear."

"You fear to acknowledge that your correspondent has deceived you?"

Oh ! no self-love, Beauchamp. Acknowledge it, Beauchamp ; your courage cannot be doubted."

"Not so," murmured the journalist ; "on the contrary——"

Albert turned frightfully pale ; he endeavoured to speak, but the words died on his lips. "My friend," said Beauchamp, in the most affectionate tone, "I should gladly make an apology ; but, alas !——"

"But what ?"——"The paragraph was correct, my friend."

"What ! that French officer——"

"Yes."——"Fernand?"

"Yes."——"The traitor who surrendered the castle of the man in whose service he was——"

"Pardon me, my friend, that man was your father !" Albert advanced furiously towards Beauchamp, but the latter restrained him more by a mild look than by his extended hand. "My friend," said he, "here is a proof of it."

Albert opened the paper ; it was an attestation of four notable inhabitants of Yanina, proving that Colonel Fernand Mondego, in the service of Ali Tebelen, had surrendered the castle for two million crowns. The signatures were perfectly legal. Albert tottered and fell overpowered in a chair. It could no longer be doubted : the family name was fully given. After a moment's mournful silence, his heart overflowed, and he gave way to a flood of tears. Beauchamp, who had watched with sincere pity, the young man's paroxysm of grief, approached him. "Now, Albert," said he, "you understand me—Do you not ? I wished to see all, and to judge of everything for myself, hoping the explanation would be in your father's favour, and that I might do him justice. But, on the contrary, the particulars which are given prove that Fernand Mondego, raised by Ali Pacha to the rank of governor-general, is no other than Count Fernand de Morcerf ; then, recollecting the honour you had done me, in admitting me to your friendship, I hastened to you."

Albert, still extended on the chair, covered his face with both hands, as if to prevent the light from reaching him. "I hastened to you," continued Beauchamp, "to tell you, Albert, in this changing age, the faults of a father cannot revert upon his children. Few have passed through this revolutionary period, in the midst of which we were born, without some stain of infamy or blood to soil the uniform of the soldier, the gown, or statesman. Now I have these proofs, Albert, and I am in your confidence, no human power can force me to a duel which your own conscience would reproach you with as criminal, but I come to offer you what you can no longer demand of me. Do you wish these proofs, these attestations, which I alone possess, to be destroyed ? Do you wish this frightful secret to remain with us ? Confided to me, it shall never escape my lips ; say, Albert, my friend, do you wish it ?"

Albert threw himself on Beauchamp's neck. "Ah ! noble fellow !" cried he.

"Take these," said Beauchamp, presenting the papers to Albert.

Albert seized them with a convulsive hand, tore them in pieces ; and, trembling lest the least vestige should escape, and one day appear to confront him, he approached the waxlight, always kept burning for cigars, and consumed every fragment. "Dear, excellent friend !" murmured Albert, still burning the papers.

"Let all be forgotten as a sorrowful dream," said Beauchamp ; "let it vanish as the last sparks from the blackened paper, and disappear as the smoke from those silent ashes."——"Yes, yes," said Albert, "and may there

remain only the eternal friendship which I promised to my deliverer, which shall be transmitted to our children's children, and shall always remind me that I owe my life and the honour of my name to you ; for had this been known, oh ! Beauchamp, I should have destroyed myself ; or,—no, my poor mother ! I could not have killed her by the same blow,—I should have fled from my country.”——“ Dear Albert,” said Beauchamp. But this sudden and factitious joy soon forsook the young man, and was succeeded by still greater grief.

“ Well,” said Beauchamp, “ what still oppresses you, my friend ?”

“ I am broken-hearted,” said Albert. “ Listen, Beauchamp ! I cannot thus, in a moment, relinquish the respect, the confidence, and pride with which a father's untarnished name inspires a son. Oh ! Beauchamp, Beauchamp ! how shall I now approach mine ? Shall I draw back my forehead from his embrace, or withhold my hand from his ? I am the most wretched of men. Ah ! my mother, my poor mother !” said Albert, gazing through his tears at his mother's portrait ; “ if you know this, how much must you suffer ?”

“ Come,” said Beauchamp, taking both his hands, “ take courage, my friend.”——“ But how came that first note inserted in your journal ? Some unknown enemy,—an invisible foe has done this.”

“ The more must you fortify yourself, Albert. Let no trace of emotion be visible on your countenance ; bear your grief as the cloud bears within it ruin and death ; a fatal secret, known only when the storm bursts. Go, my friend, reserve your strength for the moment when the crash shall come.”

“ You think, then, all is not over yet ?” said Albert, horror-stricken.

“ I think nothing, my friend ; but all things are possible. *A propos*——”

“ What ?” said Albert, seeing Beauchamp hesitated.

“ Are you going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars.”

“ Why do you ask me now ?”——“ Because the rupture or fulfilment of this engagement is connected with the person of whom we were speaking.”

——“ How ?” said Albert, whose brow reddened : “ you think, M. Danglars——”

“ I ask you only how your engagement stands ? Pray put no construction on my words I do not mean they should convey, and give them no undue weight.”

“ No,” said Albert, “ the engagement is broken off.”——“ Well !” said Beauchamp. Then, seeing the young man was about to relapse into melancholy, “ Let us go out, Albert,” said he ; “ a ride in the wood in the phaeton, or on horseback, will refresh you ; we will then return to breakfast, and you shall attend to your affairs, and I to mine.”

“ Willingly,” said Albert ; “ but let us walk : I think a little exertion would do me good.” The two friends walked out on the fortress. When arrived at La Madeleine,—“ Since we are out,” said Beauchamp, “ let us call on M. de Monte-Cristo ; he is admirably adapted to revive one's spirits, because he never interrogates ; and, in my opinion, those who ask no questions are the best comforters.”

“ Gladly,” said Albert ; “ I love him—let us call.”

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE JOURNEY.

MONTE-CRISTO uttered a joyful exclamation on seeing the young people together. "Ah ! ah !" said he, "I hope all is over, explained and settled."—"Yes," said Beauchamp ; "the absurd reports have died away, and should they be renewed, I would be the first to oppose them ; so let us speak no more of it."

"Albert will tell you," replied the count, "that I gave him the same advice. Look," added he, "I am finishing the most execrable morning's work."—"What is it?" said Albert ; "arranging your papers, apparently."

"My papers, thank God, no ! my papers are all in capital order, because I have none ; but M. Cavalcanti's."

"M. Cavalcanti's?" asked Beauchamp.

"Yes ; do you not know that this is a young man whom the count is introducing?" said Morcerf.—"Let us not misunderstand each other," replied Monte-Cristo ; "I introduce no one, and certainly not M. Cavalcanti."—"And who," said Albert, with a forced smile, "is to marry Mademoiselle Danglars instead of me, which grieves me cruelly."

"What ! Cavalcanti is going to marry Mademoiselle Danglars?" asked Beauchamp.—"Certainly ! do you come from the end of the world?" said Monte-Cristo ; "you, a journalist, the husband of renown ! it is the talk of all Paris."

"And you, count, have made this match?" asked Beauchamp.

"I? Silence, Monsieur le Nouvelliste, do not spread that report. I make a match ! No, you do not know me ; I have done all in my power to oppose it."—"Ah ! I understand," said Beauchamp, "on our friend Albert's account."

"On my account?" said the young man ; "oh, no, indeed ! the count will do me the justice to assert that I have, on the contrary, always entreated him to break off my engagement, and happily it is ended. The count pretends I have not him to thank ; but I perfectly well know to whom I am indebted."—"Listen," said Monte-Cristo ; "I have had little to do with it, for I am at variance both with the father-in-law and the young man ; there is only Mademoiselle Eugénie, who appears but little charmed with the thoughts of matrimony, and who, seeing how little I was disposed to persuade her to renounce her dear liberty, retains any affection for me."

"And do you say this wedding is at hand?"—"Oh, yes, in spite of all I could say. I do not know the young man ; he is said to be of good family and rich, but I never trust to vague assertions. I have warned M. Danglars of it till I am tired, but he is fascinated with his Lucquois. I have even informed him of a circumstance I consider very serious ; the young man was either changed by his nurse, stolen by gipsies, or lost by his tutor, I scarcely know which. But I do know his father lost sight of him for more than ten years ; what he did during these ten years, God only knows. Well, all that was useless. They have commissioned me to write to the major to demand papers ; and here they are. I send them, but will have nothing more to do with the matter."

"And what does Mademoiselle d'Armilly say to you for robbing her of her pupil?"—"Forsooth ! I know not ; but I understand she is going to Italy. Madame Danglars asked me for letters of recommendation for the impresari ; I gave her a few lines for the director of the Valle Theatre,

who is under some obligation to me. But what is the matter, Albert? you look dull; are you, after all, unconsciously in love with Mademoiselle Eugénie?"

"I am not aware of it," said Albert, smiling sorrowfully. Beauchamp turned to look at some paintings. "But," continued Monte-Cristo, "you are not in your usual spirits?"—"I have a dreadful headache," said Albert.

"Well! my dear viscount," said Monte-Cristo, "I have an infallible remedy to propose to you."—"What is that?" asked the young man.

"A change."—"Indeed!" said Albert.

"Yes; and as I am just now excessively annoyed, I shall go from home. Shall we go together?"

"You annoyed, count?" said Beauchamp; "and by what?"—"*Pardieu!* you think very lightly of it; I should like to see you with a breviate preparing in your house."

"What breviate?"

"The one M. de Villefort is preparing against my amiable assassin—some brigand escaped from the galleys apparently."—"True," said Beauchamp; "I saw it in the paper. Who is this Caderousse?"—"Some provincial, it appears. M. de Villefort heard of him at Marseilles, and M. Danglars recollects having seen him. Consequently, M. le Procureur is very active in the affair, and the prefect of police very much interested; and, thanks to that interest, for which I am very grateful, they send me all the robbers of Paris and the neighbourhood, under pretence of their being Caderousse's murderers; so that in three months, if this continue, every robber and assassin in France will have the plan of my house at his fingers' end. I am resolved to desert them and to go to some remote corner of the earth, and shall be happy if you will accompany me."—"Where?"—"Anywhere."

"Beauchamp is a worthy fellow," said Monte-Cristo, when the journalist was gone; "is he not, Albert?"

"Yes, and a sincere friend; I love him devotedly. But now we are alone, although it is immaterial to me, where are we going?"

"Into Normandy, if you like."—"Delightful; shall we be quite retired? have no society, no neighbours?"

"Our companions will be riding-horses, dogs to hunt with, and a fishing-boat."—"Exactly what I wish for; I will apprise my mother of my intention, and return to you."

"But shall you be allowed to go into Normandy?"

"I may go where I please."

"Yes, I am aware you may go alone, since I once met you in Italy—but to accompany the mysterious Monte-Cristo?"—"You forget, count, that I have often told you of the deep interest my mother takes in you."—" 'Woman is fickle,' said Francis I.; 'woman is like a wave of the sea,' said Shakspeare; both the great king and the poet ought to have known woman's nature well."—"My mother is not such a woman; careful in forming her opinion, she changes it not."

"Yes, truly," said Monte-Cristo, with a sigh; "and do you think she is in the least interested in me?"—"I repeat it, you must really be a very strange and superior man, for my mother is so absorbed by the interest you have excited, that when I am with her she speaks of no one else."—"And does she try to make you dislike me?"

"On the contrary, she often says, 'Morcerf, I believe the count to be a noble fellow; try to gain his esteem.'"

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, sighing.—"You see, then," said Albert, "that instead of opposing, she will encourage me."

"Adieu, then, until five o'clock; be punctual, and we shall arrive at twelve or one."—"At Tréport?"

"Yes; or in the neighbourhood."

"But can we travel forty-eight leagues in eight hours?"

"Easily," said Monte-Cristo.

"You are certainly a prodigy; you will soon not only surpass the railway, which would not be very difficult in France, but even the telegraph."

"Meanwhile, viscount, since we cannot perform the journey in less than seven or eight hours, do not keep me waiting."

"Do not fear, I have little to prepare." Monte-Cristo smiled as he nodded to Albert, then remained a moment absorbed in deep meditation. But passing his hand across his forehead as if to dispel his reverie, he rang the bell twice, and Bertuccio entered. "Bertuccio," said he, "I intend going this evening to Normandy, instead of to-morrow or the next day; you will have sufficient time before five o'clock; despatch a messenger to apprise the grooms at the first station. M. de Morcerf will accompany me." Bertuccio obeyed, despatched a courier to Pontoise to say the travelling-carriage would arrive at six o'clock. From Pontoise another express was sent to the next stage, and in six hours all the horses stationed on the road were ready. Before his departure, the count went to Haydée's apartments, told her his intention, and resigned everything to her care. Albert was punctual. The journey soon became interesting from its rapidity, of which Morcerf had formed no previous idea. "Truly," said Monte-Cristo, "with your post-horses going at the rate of two leagues an hour, and that absurd law that one traveller shall not pass another without permission, so that an invalid or ill-tempered traveller may detain those who are well and active, it is impossible to move; I escape them."

annoyance by travelling with my own postilion and horses ; do I not Ali ?”

The count put his head out of the window and whistled, and the horses appeared to fly. The carriage rolled with a thundering noise over the pavement, and every one turned to notice the dazzling meteor. Ali, smiling, repeated the sound, grasped the reins with a firm hand, and spurred his horses, whose beautiful manes floated in the breeze. This child of the desert was in his element ; and with his black face and sparkling eyes, appeared in the cloud of dust he raised like the genius of the simoom and the god of the hurricane. “ I never knew till now the delight of speed,” said Morcerf, and the last cloud disappeared from his brow ; “ but where the devil do you get such horses ? are they made to order ?”

“ Precisely,” said the count ; “ six years since I bought a horse in Hungary remarkable for its swiftness. The thirty-two that we shall see to-night are its progeny ; they are all entirely black, with the exception of a star upon the forehead.”

“ That is perfectly admirable ; but what do you do, count, with all these horses ?” — “ You see, I travel with them.”

“ But you are not always travelling.”

“ When I no longer require them, Bertuccio will sell them ; and he expects to realise thirty or forty thousand francs by the sale.”

“ But no monarch in Europe will be wealthy enough to purchase them.”

“ Then he will sell them to some Eastern vizier, who will empty his coffers to purchase them, and refill them by applying the bastinado to his subjects.”

“ Count, may I suggest one idea to you ?” — “ Certainly.”

“ It is that, next to you, Bertuccio must be the richest gentleman in Europe.” — “ You are mistaken, viscount ; I believe he has not a franc in

opened on a terrace, having the sea in front, and at the back a pretty park bounded by a small forest. In a creek lay a little sloop, with a narrow keel and high masts, bearing on its flag the Monte-Cristo arms, which were a mountain *or*, on a sea *azure*, with a cross *gules* on the shield. Around the schooner lay a number of small fishing-boats belonging to the fishermen of the neighbouring village, as humble subjects awaiting orders from their queen. There, as in every spot where Monte-Cristo stopped, if but for two days, all was comfort : life became easy.

Albert found in his ante-room two guns, with all the accoutrements for hunting ; a higher room, on the ground floor, containing all the ingenious instruments the English have invented for fishing. The day passed in pursuing those exercises in which Monte-Cristo excelled ; they killed a dozen pheasants in the park, as many trout in the stream, dined in a turret overlooking the ocean, and took tea in the library.

Towards the evening of the third day, Albert, completely tired with the exercise, which appeared sport to Monte-Cristo, was sleeping in an arm-chair near the window, while the count was designing with his architect the plan of a conservatory in his house, when the sound of a horse at full speed on the high road made Albert look up. He was disagreeably surprised to see his own valet-de-chambre, whom he had not brought, that he might not inconvenience Monte-Cristo.

"Florentin here !" cried he, starting up ; "is my mother ill ?" And he hastened to the door. Monte-Cristo watched him, he saw him approach the valet, who drew a small sealed parcel from his pocket, containing a newspaper and a letter. "From whom is this ?" said he eagerly. "From M. Beauchamp," replied Florentin.

"Did he send you ?"—"Yes, sir ; he sent for me to his house, gave me money for my journey, procured a horse, and made me promise not to stop till I had rejoined you ; I have come in fifteen hours."

Albert opened the letter with fear, uttered a shriek on reading the first line, and seized the paper. His sight was dimmed, his legs sank under him, and he would have fallen had not Florentin supported him.

"Poor young man !" said Monte-Cristo, with a low voice ; "it is then true that the sin of the father shall fall on the children to the third and fourth generation." Meanwhile Albert had revived, and continuing to read, he threw back his hair, saying,—"Florentin, is your horse fit to return immediately ?"—"It is a poor lame post-horse."

"In what state was the house when you left ?"—"All was quiet ; but on returning from M. Beauchamp's, I found madame in tears ; she had sent for me to know when you would return. I told her my orders from M. Beauchamp ; she first extended her arms to prevent me, but after a moment's reflection, 'Go,' said she, 'Florentin, and fetch him.'"

"Yes, my mother," said Albert, "I will return, and woe to the infamous wretch ! But first I must go——"

He returned, completely changed, to the room where he had left Monte-Cristo ; he had gone out as usual, but returned with a trembling voice, a feverish look, a threatening eye, and a tottering step. "Count," said he, "I thank you for your hospitality, which I would gladly have enjoyed longer ; but I must return to Paris."—"What has happened ?"

"A great misfortune, more important to me than life. Question me not, I pray you, but lend me a horse."—"My stables are at your command, viscount ; but you will kill yourself by riding on horseback : take a post-chaise or a carriage."

"No, it would delay me, and I require that fatigue you fear : it will do

The article having been read during this painful silence, it was only then disturbed by a universal shudder, and immediately restored when the orator resumed. He stated his scruples and the difficulties of the case: it was the honour of M. de Morcerf, and that of the whole House, he proposed to defend, by provoking a debate on those personal questions always so warmly agitated. He concluded by calling for an examination, which might confound the calumnious report before it had time to spread, and to restore M. de Morcerf to the position he had long held in public opinion. Morcerf was so completely overwhelmed by this enormous and unexpected calamity that he could scarcely stammer a few words as he looked round on the assembly. This timidity, which might proceed from the astonishment of innocence as well as the shame of guilt, conciliated some in his favour; for men who are truly generous are always ready to compassionate when the misfortune of their enemy surpasses the limits of their hatred. The president put it to the vote, and it was decided the examination should take place. The count was asked what time he required to prepare his defence. Morcerf's courage had revived when he found himself alive after this horrible blow. "My lords," answered he, "it is not by time I could repel the attack made on me by enemies unknown to me, and, doubtless, hidden in obscurity; it is immediately, and by a thunderbolt, I must repel the flash of lightning which, for a moment, startled me. Oh! that I could, instead of taking up this defence, shed my last drop of blood to prove to my noble colleagues that I am their equal in worth." These words made a favourable impression on behalf of the accused. "I demand, then, that the examination shall take place as soon as possible, and I will furnish the house with all necessary information."—"What day do you fix?" asked the president.

"To-day I am at your service," replied the count. The president rang the bell. "Does the House approve that the examination should take place to-day?"—"Yes!" was the unanimous answer.

A committee of twelve members was chosen to examine the proofs brought forward by Morcerf. The examination would commence at eight o'clock that evening in the committee-room, and, if it were necessary to postpone it, it would be resumed each evening at the same hour. Morcerf asked leave to retire; he had to collect the documents he had long been preparing against this storm, which his sagacity had foreseen.

Albert listened, trembling now with hope, then with anger, and then again with shame; for, from Beauchamp's confidence, he knew his father was guilty; and he asked himself how, since he was guilty, he could prove his innocence. Beauchamp hesitated to continue his narrative. "What next?" asked Albert.

"What next? My friend, you impose a painful task on me. Must you know all?"—"Absolutely; and rather from your lips than another's."—"Prepare your courage, then; for never will you have required it more." Albert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to try his strength, as a man, who is preparing to defend his life, proves his shield and bends his sword. He thought himself strong enough, for he mistook fever for energy. "Proceed," said he.

"The evening arrived: all Paris was in expectation. Many said your father had only to show himself to confound the charge; many others said he would not appear; while some asserted they had seen him start for Brussels, and others went to the police-office to inquire if he had taken out a passport. I used all my influence with one of the committee, a young peer of my acquaintance, to get introduced into a sort of gallery.

He called for me at seven o'clock, and, before any one had arrived, asked one of the door-keepers to place me in a box. I was concealed by a column, and might witness the whole of the terrible scene which was about to take place. At eight o'clock all were in their places, and M. de Morcerf entered at the last stroke. He held some papers in his hand; his countenance was calm, and step firm, his dress particularly nice, and, according to the ancient military costume, buttoned completely up to the chin. His presence produced a good effect. His committee was composed of liberal men, several of whom came forward to shake hands with him."

Albert felt his heart bursting at these particulars, but gratitude mingled with his sorrow; he would gladly have embraced those who had given his father this proof of esteem at a moment when his honour was so powerfully attacked. "At this moment one of the door-keepers brought in a letter for the president. 'You are at liberty to speak, M. de Morcerf,' said the president, as he unsealed the letter; and the count began his defence, I assure you, Albert, in a most eloquent and skilful manner. He produced documents, proving that the vizier of Yanina had, to the last moment, honoured him with his entire confidence, since he had entrusted him with a negotiation of life and death with the emperor. He produced the ring, his mark of authority, with which Ali Pacha generally sealed his letters, and which the latter had given him that he might, on his return at any hour of the day or night, or even in his harem, gain access to him. Unfortunately, the negotiation failed, and when he returned to defend his benefactor, he was dead. 'But,' said the count, 'so great was Ali Pacha's confidence, that, on his death-bed, he resigned his favourite mistress and her daughter to my care.'" Albert started on hearing these words: the history of Haydée recurred to him, and he remembered what she had said of that message and the ring, and the manner in which she had been sold and made a slave. "And what effect did this discourse produce?" anxiously inquired Albert. "I acknowledge it affected me, and, indeed, all the committee also," said Beauchamp.

"Meanwhile, the president carelessly opened the letter which had been brought to him; but the first lines aroused his attention: he read them again and again, and fixing his eyes on M. de Morcerf,—'M. le Comte,' said he, 'you have said the vizier of Yanina had confided his wife and daughter to your care?'—'Yes, sir,' replied Morcerf, 'but in that, like all the rest, misfortune pursued me; on my return, Vasiliki and her daughter Haydée had disappeared.'—'Did you know them?'—'My intimacy with the pacha and his unlimited confidence had gained me an introduction to them, and I had seen them above twenty times.'"

"Have you any idea what is become of them?'—'Yes, sir; I heard they had fallen victims to their sorrow, and, perhaps, to their poverty. I was not rich; my life was in constant danger; I could not seek them, to my great regret.' The president frowned imperceptibly. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'you have heard M. le Comte de Morcerf's defence. Can you, M. le Comte, produce any witnesses to the truth of what you have asserted?'—'Alas! no, sir,' replied the count, 'all those who surrounded the vizier, or who knew me at his court, are either dead or scattered; alone, I believe, of all my countrymen, I survived that dreadful war: I have only the letters of Ali Tebelen, which I have placed before you; the ring, a token of his good-will, which is here; and, lastly, the most convincing proof I can offer, namely, after an anonymous attack, the absence of all witness against my veracity and the purity of my military life.' A

the count was thoughtful and silent. The pr

"Mr. President,—I can furnish the co
conduct of the Lieutenant-General Count de
Macedonia with important particulars."

"The president paused, and the count t
looked at his auditors. 'Proceed,' was heard
resumed :—

"I was on the spot at the death of Ali Pa
his last moments ; I know what is become of
at the command of the committee, and even
heard. I shall be in the lobby when this note

"And who is this witness, or rather this er
tone in which there was a visible alteration. '
the president. 'Is the committee willing to h
yes,' said they all at once. The door-keeper
one in the lobby?' said the president.

"Yes, sir."—"Who is it?"—"A female,
Every one looked at his neighbour. 'Introdu
sident. Five minutes after, the door-keeper
were fixed on the door, and I," said Beauch
expectation and anxiety. Behind the door-ke
veloped in a large veil, which completely conce
from her figure and the perfumes she had about
and elegant woman, but that was all. The f
throw aside her veil, and it was then seen she
costume, and was remarkably beautiful."

"Ah !" said Albert, "it was she."—"Who
Haydée."—"Who told you that?"

"Alas ! I guess it. But go on, Beauchamp.
strong. And yet we must be drawing near t
Morcef" continued "

particular has escaped my memory.'—'In what manner could those events concern you? and who are you, that they should have made so deep an impression on you?'—'On them depended my father's life,' replied she. 'I am Haydée, the daughter of Ali Tebelen, pacha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his beloved wife.'

"The blush of mingled pride and modesty which suddenly suffused the cheeks of the young female, the brilliancy of her eye, and her highly important communication, produced an inexpressible effect on the assembly. As for the count, he could not have been more overwhelmed if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet and opened before him an immense gulf. 'Madame,' replied the president, bowing with profound respect, 'allow me to ask one question, it shall be the last: Can you prove the authenticity of what you have now stated?'—'I can, sir,' said Haydée, drawing from under her veil a satin satchel highly perfumed; 'for here is the register of my birth, signed by my father and his principal officers; and that of my baptism, my father having consented to my being brought up in my mother's faith; this latter has been sealed by the grand primate of Macedonia and Epirus, and lastly (and perhaps the most important), the record of the sale of my person and that of my mother to the Armenian merchant El-Kobbir, by the French officer, who, in his infamous bargain with the Porte, had reserved as his part of the booty, the wife and daughter of his benefactor, whom he sold for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.' A greenish paleness spread over the count's cheeks, and his eyes became bloodshot, at these terrible imputations, which were listened to by the assembly with an ill-foreboding silence.

"Haydée, still calm, but whose calmness was more dreadful than the anger of another would have been, handed to the president the record of her sale, registered in Arabic. It had been supposed some of these papers might be registered in the Arabian, Romaic, or Turkish language, and the interpreter of the House was in attendance. One of the noble peers, who was familiar with the Arabian language, having studied it during the sublime Egyptian campaign, followed with his eye as the translator read aloud:—

"'I, El-Kobbir, a slave-merchant, and furnisher of the harem of his highness, acknowledge having received for transmission to the sublime emperor, from the French lord, Count of Monte-Cristo, an emerald valued at eight hundred thousand francs, as the ransom of a young Christian slave of eleven years of age, named Haydée, the acknowledged daughter of the late Lord Ali Tebelen, Pacha of Yanina, and of Vasiliki, his favourite; she having been sold to me seven years previously, with her mother, who had died on arriving at Constantinople, by a French colonel in the service of the Vizier Ali Tebelen, named Fernand Mondego. The above-mentioned purchase was made on his highness's account, whose mandate I had, for the sum of four hundred thousand francs.

"Given at Constantinople, by authority of his highness, in the year 1247 of the Hegira.

"'Signed EL-KOBBIR.'

"'That this record should have all due authority, it shall bear the imperial seal, which the vendor is bound to have affixed to it.'

"Near the merchant's signature there was, indeed, the seal of the sublime emperor. A dreadful silence succeeded the reading of this paper; the count could only look, and his gaze, fixed as if unconsciously on Haydée, seemed one of fire and blood. 'Madame,' said the president

noble protector, but I do it from
because I can live with my thought
M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo surro
I am ignorant of nothing which p
silence of my apartments : for inst
periodical, as well as every new me
of the life of others, I learned wha
House of Peers, and what was to ta

"Then," remarked the presiden
nothing of your present proceedings
and I have but one fear, which is, I
have done. But it is a glorious d
raising her ardent gaze to heaven, 't
tunity of avenging my father !'

"The count had not uttered one
leagues looked at him, and doubtle
sank under the perfumed breath of a
sinister lines on his countenance. 'y
you recognise this lady as the daugh
——' No,' said Morcerf, attempting
my enemies.' Haydée, whose eyes
expecting some one, turned hastily, at
'You do not know me?' said she.
You are Fernand Mondego, the Fre
noble father ! It is you who surren
who, sent by him to Constantinople,
or death of your benefactor, broug
pardon ! It is you who, with that
which gave you authority over Sel
stabbed Selim ! It is you who sol
chant, El-Kobbir ! Assassin ! assas
brow your master's blood ! Look, g

"These words had been pronounc

on Morcerf, and deprived him of a portion of his energy ; as she uttered the last, he hid hastily in his bosom his hand, which had indeed been mutilated by a wound, and fell back on his chair, overwhelmed by wretchedness and despair. This scene completely changed the opinion of the assembly respecting the accused count.

" 'M. le Comte de Morcerf,' said the president, 'do not allow yourself to be depressed ; answer. The justice of the court is supreme and impartial as that of God ; it will not suffer you to be trampled on by your enemies without giving you an opportunity of defending yourself. Shall further inquiries be made ? Shall two members of the House be sent to Yanina ? Speak !' Morcerf did not reply. Then all the members looked at each other with terror. They knew the count's energetic and violent temper ; it must be, indeed, a dreadful blow which would deprive him of courage to defend himself. They expected this silence, resembling a sleep, would be followed by an awakening like a thunderbolt. 'Well,' asked the president, 'what is your decision ?'

" 'I have no reply to make,' said the count, in a low tone.

" 'Has the daughter of Ali Tebelen spoken the truth ?' said the president. 'Is she, then, the terrible witness to whose charge you dare not plead "Not guilty ?" Have you really committed the crimes of which you are accused ?' The count looked round him with an expression which might have softened tigers, but which could not disarm his judges. Then he raised his eyes towards the ceiling, but withdrew them immediately, as if he feared the roof would open and reveal to his distressed view that second tribunal called heaven, and that other judge named God. Then, with a hasty movement, he tore open his coat, which seemed to stifle him, and flew from the room like a madman ; his footstep was heard one moment in the corridor, then the rattling of his carriage-wheels as he was driven rapidly away. 'Gentlemen,' said the president, when silence was restored, 'is M. le Comte de Morcerf convicted of felony, treason, and outrage ?'—'Yes,' replied all the members of the committee of inquiry with a unanimous voice.

" Haydée had remained until the close of the meeting. She heard the count's sentence pronounced without betraying an expression of joy or pity ; then, drawing her veil over her face, she bowed majestically to the councillors, and left with that dignified step which Virgil attributes to his goddesses."

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE CHALLENGE.

" THEN," continued Beauchamp, "I took advantage of the silence and the darkness to leave the house without being seen. The doorkeeper who had introduced me was waiting for me at the door, and he conducted me through the corridors to a private entrance opening into La Rue de Vaugirard. I left with mingled feelings of sorrow and delight. Excuse me, Albert, sorrow on your account, and delight with that noble girl, thus pursuing paternal vengeance. Yes, Albert, from whatever source the blow may have proceeded—it may be from an enemy, but that enemy is only the agent of Providence." Albert held his head between his hands ; he raised his face, red with shame and bathed in tears, and seizing Beauchamp's arm, "My friend," said he, "my life is ended. I cannot calmly say with you, 'Providence has struck the blow ;' but I must discover who pursues me with

this hatred, and when I have found him I will kill him, or he will kill me I rely on your friendship to assist me, Beauchamp, if contempt has not banished it from your heart."

"Contempt, my friend! how does this misfortune affect you? No, happily that unjust prejudice is forgotten which made the son responsible for the father's actions. Review your life, Albert: although it is only just beginning, did a lovely summer's day ever dawn with greater purity than has marked the commencement of your career? No, Albert, take my advice. You are young and rich: leave Paris; all is soon forgotten in the great Babylon of excited life and changing taste. You will return after three or four years with a Russian princess for a bride, and no one will think more of what occurred yesterday than if it had happened sixteen years ago."

"Thank you, my dear Beauchamp, thank you for the excellent feeling which prompts your advice; but it cannot be thus. I have told you my wish, or, if it must be so, I will say determination. You understand that, interested as I am in this affair, I cannot see it in the same light as you do. What appears to you to emanate from a celestial source, seems to me to proceed from one far less pure. Providence appears to me to have no share in this affair; and happily so, for instead of the invisible, impalpable agent of celestial rewards and punishments, I shall find one both palpable and visible, on whom I shall revenge myself, I assure you, for all I have suffered during the last month. Now, I repeat, Beauchamp, I wish to return to human and material existence; and if you are still the friend you profess to be, help me to discover the hand that struck the blow."—"Be it so," said Beauchamp; "if you must have me descend to earth, I submit: and if you will seek your enemy, I will assist you, and I will engage to find him, my honour being almost as deeply interested as yours."

"Oh, yes, if it is true," cried the young man, "he shall pay me all I have suffered."—"Beware, Morcerf, he is already an old man."

"I will respect his age as he has respected the honour of my family ; if my father had offended him, why did he not attack him personally ? Oh, no, he was afraid to encounter him face to face."

"I do not condemn you, Albert ; I only restrain you. Act prudently."

"Oh, do not fear ; besides, you will accompany me. Beauchamp, solemn transactions should be sanctioned by a witness. Before this day closes, if M. Danglars is guilty, he shall cease to live, or I will die. *Pardieu!* Beauchamp, mine shall be a splendid funeral !"

"When such resolutions are made, Albert, they should be promptly executed. Do you wish to go to M. Danglars ? Let us go immediately." They sent for a cabriolet. On entering the banker's mansion, they perceived the phaeton and servant of M. Andrea Cavalcanti. "Ah, *parbleu!* that's good," said Albert, with a gloomy tone. "If M. Danglars will not fight with me, I will kill his son-in-law ; Cavalcanti will certainly fight." The servant announced the young man ; but the banker, recollecting what had transpired the day before, did not wish him admitted. It was, however, too late : Albert had followed the footman, and, hearing the order given, forced the door open, and, followed by Beauchamp, found himself in the banker's cabinet. "Sir," cried the latter, "am I no longer at liberty to receive whom I choose in my house ? You appear to forget yourself sadly."—"No, sir," said Albert, coldly ; "there are circumstances in which one cannot, except through cowardice—I offer you that refuge—refuse to admit certain persons at least."

"What is your errand, then, with me, sir ?"

"I mean," said Albert, approaching, without apparently noticing Cavalcanti, who stood with his back towards the fireplace—"I mean to propose a meeting in some retired corner where no one will interrupt us for ten minutes, that will be sufficient ; where two men having met, one of them will remain on the ground." Danglars turned pale ; Cavalcanti moved a step forward, and Albert turned towards him. "And you, too," said he, "come, if you like, M. le Comte ; you have a claim, being almost one of the family, and I will give as many rendezvous of that kind as I can find persons willing to accept them." Cavalcanti looked at Danglars with a stupefied air ; and the latter, making an effort, rose and advanced between the two young people. Albert's attack on Andrea had placed him on a different footing, and he hoped this visit had another cause than that he had at first supposed.

"Indeed, sir," said he to Albert, "if you are come to quarrel with this gentleman, because I have preferred him to you, I shall resign the case to the *procureur du roi*."—"You mistake, sir," said Morcerf, with a gloomy smile ; "I am not alluding in the least to matrimony, and I only addressed myself to M. Cavalcanti because he appeared disposed to interfere between us. In one respect you are right, for I am ready to quarrel with every one to-day ; but you have the first claim, M. Danglars."

"Sir," replied Danglars, pale with anger and fear, "I warn you, when I have the misfortune to meet with a mad dog, I kill it ; and far from thinking myself guilty of a crime, I believe I do society a kindness. Now, if you are mad, and try to bite me, I will kill you without pity. Is it my fault that your father has dishonoured himself ?"—"Yes ; miserable wretch !" cried Morcerf, "it is your fault." Danglars retreated a few steps. "My fault !" said he ; "you must be mad ! What do I know of the Grecian

history? Have I travelled in that country? Did I advise your father to sell the castle of Yanina—to betray——”

“Silence!” said Albert, with a thundering voice. “No; it is not you who have directly made this exposure and brought this sorrow on us, but you hypocritically provoked it.”

“I?”——“Yes; you! How came it known?”

“I suppose you read it in the paper in the account from Yanina?”

“Who wrote to Yanina?”——“To Yanina?”

“Yes. Who wrote for particulars concerning my father?”

“I imagine any one may write to Yanina.”

“But one person only wrote!”——“One only?”

“Yes; and that was you!”——“I, doubtless, wrote. It appears to me that when about to marry your daughter to a young man, it is right to make some inquiries respecting his family; it is not only a right but a duty.”

“You wrote, sir, knowing what answer you would receive.”——“I, indeed! I assure you,” cried Danglars, with a confidence and security proceeding less from fear than from the interest he really felt for the young man, “I solemnly declare to you, that I should never have thought of writing to Yanina, did I know anything of Ali Pacha’s misfortunes.”

“Who, then, urged you to write? Tell me.”——“*Pardieu!* it was the most simple thing in the world. I was speaking of your father’s past history. I said the origin of his fortune remained obscure. The person to whom I addressed my scruples asked me where your father had acquired his property? I answered, ‘In Greece.’ ‘Then,’ said he, ‘write to Yanina.’”——“And who thus advised you?”

“No other than your friend, Monte-Cristo.”

“The count of Monte-Cristo told you to write to Yanina?”

“Yes; and I wrote, and will show you my correspondence, if you like.” Albert and Beauchamp looked at each other. “Sir,” said Beauchamp, who had not yet spoken, “you appear to accuse the count, who is absent from Paris at this moment, and cannot justify himself.”——“I accuse no one, sir,” said Danglars; “I relate, and I will repeat before the count what I have said to you.”

“Does the count know what answer you received?”

“Yes; I showed it to him.”——“Did he know my father’s Christian name was Fernand, and his family name Mondego?”

“Yes; I had told him that long since; and I did nothing more than any other would have done in my circumstances, and perhaps less. When, the day after the arrival of this answer, your father came, by the advice of Monte-Cristo, to ask my daughter’s hand for you, I decidedly refused him, but without any explanation or exposure. In short, why should I have any more to do with the affair? How did the honour or disgrace of M. de Morcerf affect me? It neither increased nor decreased my income.”

Albert felt the colour mounting to his brow; there was no doubt upon the subject, Danglars defended himself with the baseness, but, at the same time, with the assurance, of a man who speaks the truth, at least in part, if not wholly—not for conscience’ sake, but through fear. Besides, what was Morcerf seeking? It was not whether Danglars or Monte-Cristo was more or less guilty; it was a man who would answer for the offence, whether trifling or serious; it was a man who would fight, and it was evident Danglars would not fight. And, in addition to this, everything for-

gotten or unperceived before, presented itself now to his recollection. Monte-Cristo knew everything, as he had bought the daughter of Ali Pacha ; and, knowing everything, he had advised Danglars to write to Yanina. The answer known, he had yielded to Albert's wish to be introduced to Haydée, and allowed the conversation to turn on the death of Ali, and had not opposed Haydée's recital (but having, doubtless, warned the young girl, in the few Romaic words he spoke to her, not to discover Morcerf's father). Besides, had he not begged of Morcerf not to mention his father's name before Haydée ? Lastly, he had taken Albert to Normandy when he knew the final blow approached. There could be no doubt that all had been calculated and previously arranged ; Monte-Cristo then was in league with his father's enemies. Albert took Beauchamp aside, and communicated these ideas to him.

"You are right," said the latter ; "M. Danglars has only been a secondary agent in this sad affair ; and it is of M. de Monte-Cristo that you must demand an explanation." Albert turned. "Sir," said he to Danglars, "understand that I do not take a final leave of you ; I must ascertain if your insinuations are just, and am going now to inquire of the count of Monte-Cristo." He bowed to the banker, and went out with Beauchamp, without appearing to notice Cavalcanti. Danglars accompanied him to the door, where he again assured Albert no motive of personal hatred influenced him against the count de Morcerf.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE INSULT.

AT the banker's door Beauchamp stopped Morcerf. "Listen," said he ; "just now I told you it was of M. de Monte-Cristo you must demand an explanation."—"Yes ; and we are going to his house."

"Reflect, Morcerf, one moment before you go."

"On what shall I reflect ?"

"On the importance of the step you are taking."

"Is it more serious than going to M. Danglars ?"—"Yes ; M. Danglars is a money-lover, and those who love money, you know, think too much of what they risk to be easily induced to fight a duel. The other is, on the contrary, to all appearance, a true nobleman ; but do you not fear to find in him the bravo ?"

"I only fear one thing, namely, to find a man who will not fight."

"Do not be alarmed," said Beauchamp, "he will meet you. My only fear is that he will be too strong for you."—"My friend," said Morcerf, with a sweet smile, "that is what I wish : the happiest thing that could occur to me, would be to die in my father's stead ; that would save us all."

"Your mother would die of grief."

"My poor mother !" said Albert, passing his hand across his eyes, "I know she would ; but better so than die of shame."

"Are you quite decided, Albert ?"—"Yes ; let us go."

"But do you think we shall find the count at home ?"—"He intended returning some hours after me, and doubtless he is now at home." They ordered the driver to take them to No. 30, Champs-Élysées. Beauchamp wished to go in alone ; but Albert observed, as this was an unusual circumstance, he might be allowed to deviate from the etiquette of duels. The cause which the young man espoused was one so sacred, that Beauchamp had only to comply with all his wishes : he yielded, and contented himself

with following Morcerf. Albert bounded from the porter's lodge to the steps. He was received by Baptistin. The count had, indeed, just arrived, but he was bathing, and had forbidden that any one should be admitted. "But after his bath?" asked Morcerf.

"My master will go to dinner."—"And after dinner?"

"He will sleep an hour."—"Then?"

"He is going to the opera."—"Are you sure of it?" asked Albert.

"Quite, sir; my master has ordered his horses at eight o'clock precisely."—"Very good," replied Albert; "that is all I wished to know." Then, turning towards Beauchamp, "If you have anything to attend to, Beauchamp, do it directly; if you have any appointment for this evening, defer it till to-morrow. I depend on you to accompany me to the opera; and, if you can, bring Château-Renaud with you."

Beauchamp availed himself of Albert's permission, and left him, promising to call for him at a quarter before eight. On his return home, Albert expressed his wish to Franz, Debray, and Morrel, to see them at the opera that evening. Then he went to see his mother, who, since the events of the day before, had refused to see any one, and had kept her room. He found her in bed, overwhelmed with grief at this public humiliation. The sight of Albert produced the effect which might naturally be expected on Mercédès; she pressed her son's hand, and sobbed aloud; but her tears relieved her. Albert stood one moment speechless by the side of his mother's bed. It was evident, from his pale face and knit brows, that his resolution to revenge himself was growing weaker. "My dear mother," said he, "do you know if M. de Morcerf has any enemy?" Mercédès started; she noticed that the young man did not say my father. "My son," she said, "persons in the count's situation have many secret enemies. Those who are known are not the most dangerous."—"I know it, and appeal to your penetration. You are of so superior a mind, nothing escapes you."

"Why do you say so?"—"Because, for instance, you noticed, on the evening of the ball we gave, M. de Monte-Cristo would eat nothing in our house." Mercédès raised herself on her feverish arm. "M. de Monte-Cristo!" she exclaimed; "and how is he connected with the question you asked me?"

"You know, my mother, M. de Monte-Cristo is almost an Oriental, and it is customary with them to secure full liberty of revenge by not eating or drinking in the house of their enemies."

"Do you say M. de Monte-Cristo is our enemy?" replied Mercédès, becoming paler than the sheet which covered her. "Who told you so? Why, you are mad, Albert! M. de Monte-Cristo has only shown us kindness. M. de Monte-Cristo saved your life; you, yourself, presented him to us. Oh! I entreat you, my son, if you had entertained such an idea, dispel it; and my counsel to you—even more, my prayer, is, retain his friendship."—"My mother," replied the young man, "you have special reasons for telling me to conciliate that man."

"I!" said Mercédès, blushing as rapidly as she had turned pale, and again becoming paler than ever.—"Yes, doubtless; and it is not because he can never do us any harm?" Mercédès shuddered, and, fixing on her son a scrutinising gaze, "You speak strangely," said she to Albert, "and you appear to have some singular prejudices. What has the count done? Three days since you were with him in Normandy; only three days since we looked on him as our best friend."

An ironical smile passed over Albert's lips. Mercédès saw it, and, with

her double instinct of a woman and a mother, she guessed all, but, prudent and strong-minded, she concealed both her sorrows and her fears. Albert was silent ; an instant after, the countess resumed : " You came to inquire after my health ; I will candidly acknowledge I am not well. You should install yourself here and cheer my solitude. I do not wish to be left alone." — " My mother," said the young man, " you know how gladly I would obey your wish ; but an urgent and important affair obliges me to leave you the whole evening."

" Well !" replied Mercédès, sighing ; " go, Albert, I will not make you a slave to your filial piety." Albert pretended he did not hear, bowed to his mother, and quitted her. Scarcely had he shut her door, than Mercédès called a confidential servant, and ordered him to follow Albert wherever he should go that evening, and to come and tell her immediately what he observed. Then she rang for her lady's maid, and, weak as she was, she dressed, in order to be ready for whatever might happen. The footman's mission was an easy one. Albert went to his room, and dressed with unusual care. At ten minutes to eight Beauchamp arrived ; he had seen Château-Renaud, who had promised to be in the orchestra before the curtain was raised. Both got into Albert's *coupé*, who, having no reason to conceal where he was going, called aloud, " To the opera." In his impatience, he had arrived before the commencement of the performance.

Château-Renaud was at his post ; apprised by Beauchamp of the circumstances, he required no explanation from Albert. The conduct of this son, seeking to avenge his father, was so natural, that Château-Renaud did not seek to dissuade him, and was content with renewing his assurances of devotedness to Albert. Debray was not yet come, but Albert knew he seldom lost a scene at the opera. Albert wandered about the theatre until the curtain was drawn up. He hoped to meet with M. de Monte-Cristo either in the lobby or on the stairs. The bell summoned him to his seat, and he entered the orchestra with Château-Renaud and Beauchamp. But his eyes scarcely quitted the box between the columns, which remained obstinately closed during the whole of the first act. At last, as Albert was looking at his watch, about the hundredth time, at the commencement of the second act the door opened, and Monte-Cristo, dressed in black, entered, and leaning over the front of the box, looked round the pit. Morrel followed him, and looked also for his sister and brother-in-law ; he soon discovered them in another box, and kissed his hand to them.

The count, in his survey of the pit, encountered a pale face and threatening eyes, which evidently sought to gain his attention. He recognised Albert, but thought it better not to notice him, as he looked so angry and discomposed. Without communicating his thoughts to his companion, he sat down, drew out his opera-glass, and looked another way. Although apparently not noticing Albert, he did not, however, lose sight of him ; and when the curtain fell at the end of the second act, he saw him leave the orchestra with his two friends. Then his head was seen passing at the back of the boxes, and the count knew the approaching storm was intended to fall on him. He was at the moment conversing cheerfully with Morrel, but he was well prepared for what might happen. The door opened, and Monte-Cristo, turning round, saw Albert, pale and trembling, followed by Beauchamp and Château-Renaud.

" Well," cried he, with that benevolent politeness which distinguished his salutation from the common civilities of the world, " my cavalier has attained his object. Good evening, M. de Morcerf." The countenance

of this man, who possessed such extraordinary control over his feelings, expressed the most perfect cordiality. Morrel only then recollected the letter he had received from the viscount, in which, without assigning any reason, he begged him to go to the opera, but he understood that something terrible was brooding.

"We are not come here, sir, to exchange hypocritical expressions of politeness, or false professions of friendship," said Albert, "but to demand an explanation, count." The trembling voice of the young man was scarcely audible. "An explanation at the opera?" said the count, with that calm tone and penetrating eye which characterizes the man who knows his cause is good. "Little acquainted as I am with the habits of Parisians, I should not have thought this the place for such a demand."—"Still, if people will shut themselves up," said Albert, "and cannot be seen because they are bathing, dining, or asleep, we must avail ourselves of the opportunity whenever they are to be seen."

"I am not difficult of access, sir; for yesterday, if my memory does not deceive me, you were at my house."—"Yesterday I was at your house, sir," said the young man; "because then I knew not who you were." In pronouncing these words Albert had raised his voice so as to be heard by those in the adjoining boxes and in the lobby. Thus the attention of many was attracted by this altercation. "Where are you come from, sir? You do not appear to be in the possession of your senses."—"Provided I understand your perfidy, sir, and succeed in making you understand that I will be revenged, I shall be reasonable enough," said Albert, furiously.

"I do not understand you, sir," replied Monte-Cristo; "and if I did, your tone is too high. I am at home here, and I alone have a right to raise my voice above another's. Leave the box, sir!" Monte-Cristo pointed towards the door with the most commanding dignity. "Ah! I shall know how to make you leave your home!" replied Albert, claspings in his convulsed grasp the glove, which Monte-Cristo did not lose sight of.—"Well, well!" said Monte-Cristo, quietly, "I see you wish to quarrel with me: but I would give you one counsel, and do not forget it: it is a bad habit to make a display of a challenge. Display is not becoming to every one, M. de Morcerf." At this name a murmur of astonishment passed round the group of spectators of this scene. They had talked of no one but Morcerf the whole day. Albert understood the allusion in a moment, and was about to throw his glove at the count, when Morrel seized his hand, while Beauchamp and Château-Renaud, fearing the scene would surpass the limits of a challenge, held him back. But Monte-Cristo, without rising, and leaning forward in his chair, merely extended his hand, and taking the damp, crushed glove from the clenched hand of the young man,—"Sir," said he, in a solemn tone, "I consider your glove thrown, and will return it you round a bullet. Now, leave me, or I will summon my servants to throw you out at the door."

Wild, almost unconscious, and with eyes inflamed, Albert stepped back, and Morrel closed the door. Monte-Cristo took up his glass again as if nothing had happened: he certainly must have had a heart of brass and face of marble. Morrel whispered, "What have you done to him?"—"I? Nothing—at least personally," said Monte-Cristo.

"But there must be some cause for this strange scene."

"The count de Morcerf's adventure exasperates the young man."

"Have you anything to do with it?"

"It was by Haydée the house was informed of his father's treason."

"Indeed!" said Morrel. "I had been told, but would not credit it,

that the Grecian slave I have seen with you here in this very box was the daughter of Ali Pacha."—"It is, notwithstanding, true."

"Then," said Morrel, "I understand it all, and this scene was premeditated."—"How so?"

"Yes. Albert wrote to request me to come to the opera, doubtless that I might be a witness to the insult he meant to offer you."

"Probably," said Monte-Cristo, with his imperturbable tranquillity.

"But what will you do with him?"—"With whom?"

"With Albert."—"What will I do with Albert? As certainly, Maximilian, as I now press your hand, I will kill him before ten o'clock to-morrow morning." Morrel, in his turn, took Monte-Cristo's hand in both of his, and he shuddered to feel how cold and steady it was.

"Ah! count," said he, "his father loves him so much!"—"Do not speak to me of that!" said Monte-Cristo, with the first movement of anger he had betrayed; "I will make him suffer." Morrel, amazed, let fall Monte-Cristo's hand. "Count! count!" said he.

"Dear Maximilian," interrupted the count, "listen how adorably Duprez is singing that line,—

'O Mathilde! idole de mon âme!'

I was the first to discover Duprez at Naples, and the first to applaud him. 'Bravo! bravo!' Morrel saw it was useless to say more, and refrained. The curtain, which had been drawn up during the scene with Albert, again fell, and a rap was heard at the door.

"Come in!" said Monte-Cristo, without his voice betraying the least emotion; and immediately Beauchamp appeared. "Good evening, M. Beauchamp," said Monte-Cristo, as if this was the first time he had seen the journalist that evening; "take a seat."

Beauchamp bowed, and sitting down, "Sir," said he, "I just now accompanied M. de Morcerf, as you saw."—"And that means," replied Monte-Cristo, laughing, "that you had, probably, just dined together. I am happy to see, M. Beauchamp, you are more sober than he was."—"Sir," said M. Beauchamp, "Albert was wrong, I acknowledge, to betray so much anger, and I come, on my own account, to apologise for him. And having done so, on my own account only, you understand, M. le Comte, I would add that I believe you too gentlemanly to refuse giving him some explanation concerning your connection with Yanina. Then I will add two words about the young Greek girl." Monte-Cristo motioned him to be silent. "Come," said he, laughing, "there are all my hopes about to be destroyed."

"How so?" asked Beauchamp.

"Doubtless you wish to make me appear a very eccentric character; I am, in your opinion, a Lara, a Manfred, a Lord Ruthven: then, just as I am arriving at the climax, you defeat your own end, and seek to make a common man of me. You bring me down to your own level, and demand explanations! Indeed, M. Beauchamp, it is quite laughable."—"Yet," replied Beauchamp, haughtily, "there are occasions when probity commands—"

"M. Beauchamp," interposed this strange man, "the count of Monte-Cristo bows to none but the count of Monte-Cristo himself. Say no more, I entreat you. I do what I please, M. Beauchamp, and it is always well done."—"Sir," replied the young man, "honest men are not to be paid with such coin. I require honourable guarantees."—"I am, sir, a living guarantee," replied Monte-Cristo, motionless, but with a threatening look;

"we have both blood in our veins which we wish to shed—that is our mutual guarantee. Tell the viscount so, and that to-morrow, before ten o'clock, I shall see what colour his is."—"Then, I have only to make arrangements for the duel," said Beauchamp.

"It is quite immaterial to me," said Monte-Cristo, "and it was very unnecessary to disturb me at the opera for such a trifle. In France people fight with the sword or pistol, in the colonies with the carbine, in Arabia with the dagger. Tell your client that, although I am the insulted party, in order to carry out my eccentricity, I leave him the choice of arms, and will accept without discussion, without dispute, anything, even combat by drawing lots, which is always stupid, but with me different from other people, as I am sure to gain."—"Sure to gain!" repeated Beauchamp, looking with amazement at the count.

"Certainly," said Monte-Cristo, slightly shrugging up his shoulders, "otherwise I would not fight with M. de Morcerf. I shall kill him—I cannot help it. Only by a single line this evening at my house let me know the arms and the hour; I do not like to be kept waiting."—"Pistols, then, at eight o'clock, in the Bois de Vincennes," said Beauchamp, quite disconcerted, not knowing if he was dealing with an arrogant braggadocio or a supernatural being.

"Very well, sir," said Monte-Cristo. "Now all that is settled, do let me see the performance, and tell your friend Albert not to come any more this evening; he will hurt himself with all his ill-chosen barbarisms: let him go home and go to sleep." Beauchamp left the box, perfectly amazed. "Now," said Monte-Cristo, turning towards Morrel, "I may depend upon you, may I not?"—"Certainly," said Morrel, "I am at your service, count; still—" "What?"—"It is desirable I should know the real cause."

"That is to say, you would rather not?"—"No."

"The young man himself is acting blindfolded, and knows not the true cause, which is known only to God and to me; but I give you my word, Morrel, that God who does know it will be on our side."—"Enough," said Morrel, "who is your second witness?"

"I know no one in Paris, Morrel, on whom I could confer that honour besides you and your brother Emmanuel. Do you think Emmanuel would oblige me?"—"I will answer for him, count."

"Well, that is all I require. To-morrow morning, at seven o'clock, you will be with me, will you not?"—"We will."

"Hush! the curtain is rising. Listen! I never lose a note of this opera if I can avoid it: the music of 'William Tell' is so sweet!"

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE NIGHT.

M. DE MONTE-CRISTO waited, according to his usual custom, until Duprez had sung his famous "*Suivez-moi*;" then he rose, and went out. Morrel took leave of him at the door, renewing his promise to be with him the next morning at seven o'clock, and to bring Emmanuel with him. Then he stepped into his *coupé*, calm and smiling, and was at home in five minutes. No one who knew the count could mistake his expression, when, on entering, he said, "Ali, bring me my pistols with an ivory cross."

Ali brought the box to his master, who examined his arms with a solic-

tude very natural to a man who is about to intrust his life to a little powder and shot. These were particular pistols, which Monte-Cristo had had made to shoot at a target in his room. A cap was sufficient to drive out the ball, and from the adjoining room no one would have suspected the count was, as sportsmen would say, keeping his hand in. He was just taking one in his hand, and looking for the point to aim at, on a little iron plate, which served him as a target, when his cabinet-door opened, and Baptistin entered. Before he had spoken a word the count perceived in the next room a female, veiled, who had followed closely after Baptistin, and now seeing the count with a pistol in his hand and swords on the table, rushed in. Baptistin looked at his master, who made a sign to him, and he went out, closing the door after him. "Who are you, madame?" said the count to the veiled female.

The stranger cast one look around her, to be certain they were quite alone, then bending, as if she would have knelt, and joining her hands, she said, with an accent of despair,—“Edmond, you will not kill my son?” The count retreated a step, uttered a slight exclamation, and let fall the pistol he held. “What name did you pronounce then, Madame de Morcerf?” said he. “Yours!” cried she, throwing back her veil,—“yours, which I alone, perhaps, have not forgotten. Edmond, it is not Madame de Morcerf who is come to you, it is Mercédès.”—“Mercédès is dead, madame,” said Monte-Cristo; “I know no one now of that name.”

“Mercédès lives, sir, and she remembers, for she alone recognised you when she saw you, and even before she saw you, by your voice, Edmond,—by the simple sound of your voice, and from that moment she has followed your steps, watched you, feared you, and she needs not to inquire what hand has dealt the blow which now strikes M. de Morcerf.”—“Fernand, do you mean?” replied Monte-Cristo, with bitter irony; “since we are recalling names, let us remember them all.” Monte-Cristo had pronounced the name of Fernand with such an expression of hatred, that Mercédès felt a thrill of horror run through every vein. “You see, Edmond, I am not mistaken, and have cause to say, ‘Spare my son!’” —“And who told you, madame, I have any hostile intentions against our son?”

“No one, in truth; but a mother has a twofold sight. I guessed all; I followed him this evening to the opera, and have seen all.”—“If you have seen all, madame, you know that the son of Fernand has publicly insulted me,” said Monte-Cristo, with awful calmness.

Oh! for pity’s sake!”—“You have seen that he would have thrown glove in my face if Morrel, one of my friends, had not stopped him.” —“Listen to me: my son has also guessed who you are; he attributes father’s misfortunes to you.”

Madame, you are mistaken, they are not misfortunes,—it is a punishment. It is not I who strike M. de Morcerf; it is Providence which strikes him.”—“And why do you represent Providence?” cried Mercédès. “Why do you remember, when it forgets? What are Yanina and her to you, Edmond? What injury has Fernand Mondego done you by betraying Ali Tebelen?”

“No, madame,” replied Monte-Cristo, “all this is an affair between an English captain and the daughter of Vasiliki. It does not concern me, it is right; and if I have sworn to revenge myself, it is not on the English captain, nor on the count de Morcerf, but on the fisherman Fernand, the husband of the Catalan Mercédès.”—“Ah! sir,” cried the countess, “how terrible a vengeance for a fault which fatality made me

commit ! for I am the only culprit, Edmond ; and if you owe revenge to any one, it is to me, who had not fortitude to bear your absence and my solitude."—"But," exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "why was I absent ? And why were you alone ?"

"Because you had been arrested, Edmond, and were a prisoner."

"And why was I arrested ? Why was I a prisoner ?"

"I do not know," said Mercédès. "You do not, madame ; at least, I hope not. But I will tell you. I was arrested and became a prisoner, because under the arbour of La Réserve, the day before I was to marry you, a man named Danglars wrote this letter which the fisherman Fernand himself posted." Monte-Cristo went to a secrétaire, opened a drawer by a spring, from which he took a paper which had lost its original colour, and the ink of which had become a rusty hue ; this he placed in the hands of Mercédès. It was Danglars' letter to the procureur du roi, which the count of Monte-Cristo, disguised as a clerk from the house of Thomson and French, had taken from the bundle of Edmond Dantès, on the day he had paid the two hundred thousand francs to M. de Boville. Mercédès read with terror the following lines :—

"The procureur du roi is informed by a friend to the throne and the religious institutions of his country, that an individual, named Edmond Dantès, second in command on board the *Pharaon*, this day arrived from Smyrna, after having touched at Naples and Porto-Ferrajo, has been the bearer of a letter from Murat to the usurper, and again taken charge of another letter from the usurper to the Bonapartist club in Paris. Ample corroboration of this statement may be obtained by arresting the above-mentioned Edmond Dantès, who either carries the letter for Paris about with him, or has it at his father's abode. Should it not be found in possession of either father or son, then it will assuredly be discovered in the cabin belonging to the said Dantès on board the *Pharaon*."

"How dreadful !" said Mercédès, passing her hand across her brow, moist with perspiration ; "and that letter——"

"I bought it for two hundred thousand francs, madame," said Monte-Cristo ; "but that is a trifle, since it enables me to justify myself to you."

"And the result of that letter——"

"You well know, madame, was my arrest ; but you do not know how long that arrest lasted. You do not know that I remained for fourteen years within a quarter of a league of you, in a dungeon in the Château d'If. You do not know that each day of those fourteen years I renewed the vow of vengeance which I had made the first day ; and yet I knew not you had married Fernand, my calumniator, and that my father had died of hunger !"—"Can it be ?" cried Mercédès, shuddering.

"That is what I heard on leaving my prison, fourteen years after I had entered it, and that is why, on account of the living Mercédès and my deceased father, I have sworn to revenge myself on Fernand, and—I have revenged myself."

"And you are sure the unhappy Fernand did that ?"

"I am satisfied, madame, he did what I have told you ; besides that is not much more odious than a Frenchman, by adoption, having passed over to the English ; a Spaniard, by birth, having fought against the Spaniards ; a stipendiary of Ali having betrayed and murdered Ali. Compared with such things, what is the letter you have just read ? A lover's deception, which the woman who has married that man ought certainly to forgive, but not so the lover who was to have married her. Well ! the

French did not avenge themselves on the traitor ; the Spaniards did not shoot the traitor ; Ali, in his tomb, left the traitor unpunished ; but I, betrayed, sacrificed, buried, have risen from my tomb, by the grace of God, to punish that man. He sends me for that purpose, and here I am." The poor woman's head and arms fell ; her legs bent under her, and she fell on her knees. "Forgive, Edmond, forgive for my sake, who love you still !"

The dignity of the wife stopped the enthusiasm of the lover and the mother. Her forehead almost touched the carpet, when the count sprang forward and raised her. Then, seated on a chair, she looked at the manly countenance of Monte-Cristo, on which grief and hatred still impressed a threatening expression. "Not crush that accursed race !" murmured he ; "abandon my purpose at the moment of its accomplishment ! Impossible, madame, impossible !"—"Edmond," said the poor mother, who tried every means, "when I call you Edmond, why do you not call me Mercédès ?"

"Mercédès !" repeated Monte-Cristo ; "Mercédès ! Well ! yes, you are right, that name has still its charms ; and this is the first time for a long period that I have pronounced it so distinctly. O Mercédès ! I have uttered your name with the sigh of melancholy, with the groan of sorrow, with the last effort of despair ; I have uttered it when frozen with cold, crouched on the straw in my dungeon ; I have uttered it, consumed with heat, rolling on the stone floor of my prison. Mercédès, I must revenge myself, for I suffered fourteen years,—fourteen years I wept, I cursed ; now I tell you, Mercédès, I must revenge myself !"

The count, fearing to yield to the entreaties of her he had so ardently loved, recalled his sufferings to the assistance of his hatred. "Revenge yourself then, Edmond," cried the poor mother ; "but let your vengeance fall on the culprits ; on him, on me, but not on my son !" Monte-Cristo groaned, and seized his beautiful hair with both hands.

"Edmond," continued Mercédès, with her arms extended towards the count, "since I first knew you, I have adored your name, have respected your memory. Edmond, my friend, do not compel me to tarnish that noble and fine image reflected incessantly on the mirror of my heart. Edmond, if you knew all the prayers I have addressed to God for you while I thought you were living and since I have thought you must be dead ! Yes, dead, alas ! I thought your dead body was buried at the foot of some gloomy tower ; I thought your corpse was precipitated to the bottom of one of those gulfs where gaolers roll their dead prisoners, and I wept ! What could I do for you, Edmond, besides pray and weep ? Listen ; during ten years I dreamed each night the same dream. I had been told you had endeavoured to escape ; that you had taken the place of another prisoner ; that you had slipped into the winding-sheet of a dead body ; that you had been precipitated alive from the top of the Château d'If ; and the cry you uttered as you dashed upon the rocks first revealed to your gaolers that they were your murderers. Well ! Edmond, I swear to you, by the head of that son for whom I entreat your pity,—Edmond, during ten years I have seen every night men balancing something shapeless and unknown at the top of a rock ; during ten years I have heard each night a terrible cry which has awoke me, shuddering and cold. And I, too, Edmond—oh ! believe me—guilty as I was—oh ! yes, I too, have suffered much !"

"Have you felt your father die in your absence ?" cried Monte-Cristo, again thrusting his hands in his hair : "have you seen the woman you

loved giving her hand to your rival while you were perishing at the bottom of a dungeon?"—"No," interrupted Mercédès, "but I have seen him whom I loved on the point of murdering my son." Mercédès pronounced these words with such deep anguish, with an accent of such intense despair, that Monte-Cristo could not restrain a sob. The lion was daunted; the avenger was conquered. "What do you ask of me?" said he,—"your son's life? Well! he shall live!" Mercédès uttered a cry which made the tears start from Monte-Cristo's eyes; but these tears disappeared almost instantaneously, for, doubtless, God had sent some angel to collect them; far more precious were they in his eyes than the richest pearls of Gazerat and of Ophir.

"Oh!" said she, seizing the count's hand, and raising it to her lips; "oh! thank you, thank you, Edmond! now you are exactly what I dreamt you were, such as I always loved you. Oh! now I may say so."

"So much the better," replied Monte-Cristo; "as that poor Edmond will not have long to be loved by you. Death is about to return to the tomb, the phantom to retire in darkness."

"What do you say, Edmond?"

"I say, since you command me, Mercédès, I must die."

"Die! and who told you so? who talks of dying? whence have you these ideas of death?"—"You do not suppose, that publicly outraged in the face of a whole theatre, in the presence of your friends and those of your son—challenged by a boy, who will glory in my pardon as in a victory—you do not suppose I can for one moment wish to live. What I most loved after you, Mercédès, was myself, my dignity, and that strength which rendered me superior to other men; that strength was my life. With one word you have crushed it, and I die."

"But the duel will not take place, Edmond, since you forgive?"

"It will take place," said Monte-Cristo, in a most solemn tone; "but instead of your son's blood which will stain the ground, mine will flow." Mercédès shrieked, and sprang towards Monte-Cristo, but suddenly stopping: "Edmond," said she, "there is a God above us, since you live, and since I have seen you again; I trust to Him from my heart. While waiting his assistance I trust to your word; you have said my son should live, have you not?"—"Yes, madame, he shall live," said Monte-Cristo, surprised that, without more emotion, Mercédès had accepted the heroic sacrifice he made for her. Mercédès extended her hand to the count.

"Edmond," said she, and her eyes were wet with tears while looking at him to whom she spoke, "how noble it is of you, how great the action you have just performed: how sublime to have taken pity on a poor woman who offered herself to you with every chance against her! Alas! I am grown old with grief more than with years, and cannot now remind my Edmond by a smile, or by a look, of that Mercédès whom he once spent so many hours in contemplating. Ah! believe me, Edmond, I told you, I too had suffered much; I repeat it, it is melancholy to pass one's life without having one joy to recall, without preserving a single hope; but that proves that all is not yet over. No; it is not finished, I feel it by what remains in my heart. Oh! I repeat it, Edmond; what you have just done is beautiful—it is grand, it is sublime."

"Do you say so, now, Mercédès, and what would you say if you knew the extent of the sacrifice I make to you? But, no, no, you cannot imagine what I lose in sacrificing my life at this moment." Mercédès looked at the count with an air which depicted at the same time her astonishment, her admiration, and her gratitude. Monte-Cristo pressed

his forehead on his burning hands, as if his brain could no longer bear alone the weight of its thoughts. "Edmond," said Mercédès, "I have but one word more to say to you." The count smiled bitterly. "Edmond," continued she, "you will see if my face is pale, if my eyes are dull, if my beauty is gone; if Mercédès, in short, no longer resembles her former self in her features, you will see her heart is still the same. Adieu, then, Edmond; I have nothing more to ask of Heaven—I have seen you again—and have found you as noble and as great as formerly you were. Adieu, Edmond, adieu, and thank you."

But the count did not answer. Mercédès opened the door of the cabinet and had disappeared before he had recovered from the painful and profound reverie into which his thwarted vengeance had plunged him. The clock of the Invalides struck one when the carriage which conveyed Madame de Morcerf away rolled on the pavement of the Champs-Élysées, and made Monte-Cristo raise his head. "What a fool I was," said he, "not to tear my heart out on the day when I resolved to avenge myself!"

CHAPTER XC.

THE MEETING.

AFTER Mercédès had left Monte-Cristo, a gloomy shadow seemed to overspread everything. Around him and within him the flight of thought appeared stopped; his energetic mind slumbered, as does the body after extreme fatigue. "What," said he to himself, while the lamp and the wax lights were nearly burnt out, and the servants were waiting impatiently in the anteroom; "what! this edifice which I have been so long preparing—which I have reared with so much care and toil, is to be crumbled by a single touch, a word, even a slight breath! Yes, this self, of whom I thought so much, of whom I was so proud, who had appeared so worthless in the dungeons of the Château d'If, and whom I had succeeded in making so great, will be but a lump of clay to-morrow. Alas! it is not the death of the body I regret; for it is not that destruction of the vital principle, the rest to which everything is tending, to which every unhappy being aspires, the repose of matter after which I so long sighed, and which I was seeking to attain by the painful process of starvation when Faria appeared in my dungeon. What is death for me but one step more towards repose? No, it is not existence, then, that I regret, but the ruin of our projects, so slowly carried out, so laboriously framed. Providence is now opposed to them, when I most thought it would be propitious. It is not God's will they should be accomplished. This burden, almost as heavy as a world, which I had raised, and I had thought to bear to the end, was too great for my strength, and I was compelled to lay it down in the middle of my career. Oh! shall I then again become a fatalist, whom fourteen years of despair and ten of hope had rendered a believer in Providence? And all this—all this, because my heart, which I thought dead, was only sleeping; because it has awoken and has beaten again; because I have yielded to the pain of the emotion excited in my breast by a woman's voice. Yet," continued the count, becoming each moment more absorbed in the anticipation of the dreadful sacrifice for the morrow, which Mercédès had accepted, "yet, it is impossible that so noble-minded a woman should thus, through selfishness, consent to my death when in the prime of life and strength; it is impossible she can carry to such a point maternal love, or rather delirium. There are virtues

which become crimes by exaggeration. No, she must have conceived some pathetic scene; she will come and throw herself between us, and what would be sublime here will appear there ridiculous." The blush of pride mounted to the count's forehead as this thought passed through his mind. "Ridiculous?" repeated he; "and the ridicule will fall on me. I ridiculous! no, I would rather die."

By thus exaggerating to his own mind the anticipated ill-fortune of the next day, to which he had condemned himself by promising Mercédès to spare her son, the count at last exclaimed—"Folly!—folly! folly! to carry generosity so far as to place myself as a mark for that young man to aim at. He will never believe my death was a suicide; and yet it is important for the honour of my memory,—and this, surely, is, not vanity, but a justifiable pride,—it is important the world should know that I have consented, by my free will, to stop my arm, already raised to strike, and that with that arm, so powerful against others, I have struck myself. It must be, it shall be." Seizing a pen, he drew a paper from a secret drawer in his bureau, and traced at the bottom of that paper, which was no other than his will, made since his arrival in Paris, a sort of codicil, clearly explaining the nature of his death. "I do this, O my God!" said he, with his eyes raised to heaven, "as much for thy honour as for mine. I have during ten years considered myself the agent of thy vengeance; and other wretches, like a Morcerf, a Danglars, a Villefort, even that Morcerf himself, must not imagine that chance has freed them from their enemy. Let them know, on the contrary, that their punishment, which had been decreed by Providence, is only delayed by my present determination; and although they escape it in this world, it awaits them in another, and that they are only exchanging time for eternity."

While he was thus agitated by these gloomy uncertainties, these wretched waking dreams of grief, the first rays of twilight pierced his windows, and shone upon the pale blue paper on which he had just traced his justification of Providence. It was just five o'clock in the morning, when a slight noise reached his ear, which appeared like a stifled sigh; he turned his head, looked around him, and saw no one; but the sound was repeated distinctly enough to convince him of its reality. He arose, and quietly opening the door of the drawing-room, saw Haydée, who had fallen on a chair with her arms hanging down, and her beautiful head thrown back. She had been standing at the door to prevent his going out without seeing her, until sleep, which the young cannot resist, had overpowered her frame, wearied as she was with watching so long. The noise of the door did not awaken her, and Monte-Cristo gazed at her with affectionate regret. "She remembered she had a son," said he; "and I forgot I had a daughter." Then, shaking his head sorrowfully, "Poor Haydée!" said he; "she wished to see me to speak to me, she has feared or guessed something. Oh! I cannot go without taking leave of her: I cannot die without confiding her to some one." He quietly regained his seat, and wrote under the other lines,—

"I bequeath to Maximilian Morrel, captain, and son of my former patron, Pierre Morrel, shipowner at Marseilles, the sum of twenty millions, a part of which may be offered to his sister Julia and brother-in-law Emmanuel, if he does not fear this increase of fortune may mar their happiness. These twenty millions are concealed in my grotto at Monte-Cristo, of which Bertuccio knows the secret. If his heart is free, and he will marry Haydée, the daughter of Ali, pacha of Yanina, whom I have

brought up with the love of a father, and who has shown the love and tenderness of a daughter for me, he will thus accomplish my last wish. This will has already constituted Haydée heiress of the rest of my fortune ; consisting of lands, funds in England, Austria, and Holland : furniture in my different palaces and houses ; and which, without the twenty millions, and the legacies to my servants, may still amount to sixty millions."

He was finishing the last line when a cry behind him made him start, and the pen fell from his hand. "Haydée," said he, "did you read it?"

"Oh ! my lord," said she, "why are you writing thus at such an hour ? why are you bequeathing all your fortune to me ? Are you going to leave me?"

"I am going on a journey, dear child," said Monte-Cristo, with an expression of infinite tenderness and melancholy ; "and if any misfortune should happen to me——" The count stopped. "Well?" asked the young girl, with an authoritative tone the count had never observed before, and which startled him. "Well ! if any misfortune happen to me," replied Monte-Cristo, "I wish my daughter to be happy." Haydée smiled sorrowfully and shook her head. "Do you think of dying, my lord?" said she. —"The wise man has said, It is good to think of death, my child."

"Well ! if you die," said she, "bequeath your fortune to others ; for, if you die I shall require nothing ;" and, taking the paper, she tore it in four pieces and threw it into the middle of the room. Then, the effort having exhausted her strength, she fell, not asleep this time, but fainting on the floor. The count leaned over her and raised her in his arms ; and seeing that sweet pale face, those lovely eyes closed, that beautiful form motionless, and to all appearance lifeless, the idea occurred to him for the first time, that perhaps she loved him otherwise than as a daughter loves a father.

"Alas !" murmured he, with intense suffering ; "I might then have been happy yet." Then he carried Haydée to her room, resigned her to the care of her attendants, and returning to his cabinet, which he shut quickly this time, he again copied the destroyed will. As he was finishing, the sound of a cabriolet entering the yard was heard. Monte-Cristo approached the window, and saw Maximilian and Emmanuel alight. "Good !" said he ; "it was time," and he sealed his will with three seals. One moment afterwards he heard a noise in the drawing-room, and went to open the door himself. Morrel was there, he had come twenty minutes before the time appointed. "I am, perhaps, come too soon, count," said he, "but I frankly acknowledge, I have not closed my eyes all night, nor any one in my house. I required to see you strong in your courageous assurance, to recover myself." Monte-Cristo could not resist this proof of affection, he not only extended his hand to the young man, but flew to him with open arms. "Morrel," said he, "it is a happy day for me, to feel I am beloved by such a man as you. Good morning, Emmanuel ; you will come with me then, Maximilian?"

"Did you doubt it?" said the young captain.

"But if I were wrong——"

"I watched you during the whole scene of that challenge yesterday ; I have been thinking of your firmness all this night, and I said, 'Justice must be on your side, or man's countenance is no longer to be relied on.'"
—"But, Morrel, Albert is your friend?"—"A simple acquaintance, sir."—"You met on the same day you first saw me?"

"Truly, but I should not have recollected it had you not reminded me."
 —"Thank you, Morrel." Then ringing the bell once, "Look," said he to Ali, who came immediately, "take that to my solicitor. It is my will, Morrel. When I am dead, you will go and examine it."

"What!" said Morrel, "you dead?"

"Yes: must I not be prepared for everything, dear friend? But what did you do yesterday after you left me?"

"I went to Tortoni, where, as I expected, I found Beauchamp and Château-Renaud. I own I was seeking them."

"Why, when all was arranged?"

"Listen, count, the affair is serious and unavoidable."—"Did you doubt it?"—"No: the offence was public, and every one is already talking of it."—"Well?"

"Well! I hoped to get an exchange of arms, to substitute the sword for the pistol; the pistol is blind."—"Have you succeeded?" asked Monte-Cristo, quickly, with an imperceptible gleam of hope.—"No, for your skill with the sword is so well known."—"Ah! who has betrayed me?"—"The skilful swordsman, whom you have conquered."

"And you failed?"—"They positively refused."—"Morrel," said the count, "have you ever seen me fire a pistol?"—"Never."

"Well, we have time; look." Monte-Cristo took the pistols he held in his hand when Mercédès entered, and fixing an ace of clubs against the iron plate, with four shots he successively shot off the four sides of the club. At each shot Morrel turned pale. He examined the balls with which Monte-Cristo performed this dexterous feat, and saw that they were no larger than deer-shot. "It is astonishing!" said he; "look, Emmanuel." Then turning towards Monte-Cristo: "Count," said he, "in the name of all that is dear to you, I entreat you not to kill Albert! the unhappy youth has a mother."—"You are right," said Monte-Cristo: "and I have none." These words were uttered in a tone which made Morrel shudder. "You are the offended party, count."

"Doubtless; what does that imply?"

"That you will fire first."—"I fire first?"

"Oh! I obtained, or rather claimed that; we had conceded enough for them to yield us that."—"And at what distance?"

"Twenty paces." A terrific smile passed over the count's lips. "Morrel," said he, "do not forget what you have just seen."

"The only chance for Albert's safety, then, will arise from your emotion."—"I suffer from emotion?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Or from your generosity, my friend; to so good a marksman as you are, I may say what would appear absurd to another."

"What is that?"—"Break his arm—wound him—but do not kill him."—"I will tell you, Morrel," said the count, "that I do not need entreating to spare the life of M. de Morcerf; he shall be so well spared, that he will return quietly with his two friends, while I——"

"And you?"

"That will be another thing; I shall be brought home."

"No, no," cried Maximilian, not knowing how to endure himself.

"As I told you, my dear Morrel, M. de Morcerf will kill me," Morrel looked at him in utter unconsciousness. "But what has happened, then, since last evening, count?"—"The same thing which happened to Brutus the night before the battle of Philippi; I have seen a phantom."—"And that phantom——"

"Told me, Morrel, I had lived long enough" Maximilian and Emmanuel

looked at each other. Monte-Cristo drew out his watch. "Let us go," said he; "it is five minutes past seven, and the appointment was for eight o'clock." A carriage was in readiness at the door. Monte-Cristo stepped into it with his two friends. He had stopped a moment in the passage to listen at a door, and Maximilian and Emmanuel, who had considerably passed forward a few steps, thought they heard him answer, by a sigh, a sob from within. As the clock struck eight, they drove up to the place of meeting. "We are the first," said Morrel, looking out of the window. "Excuse me, sir," said Baptistin, who had followed his master with indescribable terror, "but I think I see a carriage down there under the trees."

Monte-Cristo sprang lightly from the carriage, and offered his hand to assist Emmanuel and Maximilian. The latter retained the count's hand between his. "I like," said he, "to feel a hand like this when its owner relies on the goodness of his cause."

"Truly," said Emmanuel, "I perceive two young men down there, who are evidently waiting." Monte-Cristo drew Morrel, not aside, but a step or two behind his brother-in-law. "Maximilian," said he, "are your affections disengaged?" Morrel looked at Monte-Cristo with astonishment. "I do not seek your confidence, my dear friend. I only ask you a simple question; answer it,—that is all I require."

"I love a young girl, count."

"Do you love her much?"—"More than my life."

"Another hope defeated!" said the count. Then, with a sigh, "Poor Haydée!" murmured he.

"In truth, count, if I knew less of you, I should think you were less brave than you are."

"Because I sigh when thinking of some one I am leaving? Come, Morrel, it is not like a soldier to be so bad a judge of courage. Do I regret life? What is it to me, who have passed twenty years between life and death? Moreover, do not alarm yourself, Morrel: this weakness, if it is such, is betrayed to you alone. I know the world is a drawing-room, from which we must retreat politely and honestly; that is, with a bow, and debts of honour paid."

"That is to the purpose. Have you brought your arms?"

"I?—what for? I hope these gentlemen have theirs."

"I will inquire," said Morrel.

"Do, but make no treaty—you understand me?"—"You need not fear." Morrel advanced towards Beauchamp and Château-Renaud, who, seeing his intention, came to meet him. The three young people bowed to each other courteously, if not affably.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said Morrel, "but I do not see M. de Morcerf."—"He sent us word this morning," replied Château-Renaud, "that he would meet us on the ground."

"Ah!" said Morrel. Beauchamp pulled out his watch. "It is only five minutes past eight," said he to Morrel; "there is not much time lost yet."—"Oh! I made no allusion of that kind," replied Morrel.

"There is a carriage coming," said Château-Renaud. It advanced rapidly along one of the avenues leading towards the open space where they were assembled. "You are doubtless provided with pistols, gentlemen? M. de Monte-Cristo yields his right of using his."—"We had anticipated this kindness on the part of the count," said Beauchamp, "and I have brought some arms which I bought eight or ten days since, thinking

"Providence still!" murmured he; "now only am I fully convinced of being the emissary of God!"

CHAPTER XCI.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

THE Count of Monte-Cristo bowed to the five young people with a melancholy and dignified smile, and got into his carriage with Maximilian and Emmanuel. Albert, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud remained alone. The young man's look at his two friends, without being timid, appeared to ask their opinion of what he had just done.

"Indeed, my dear friend," said Beauchamp first, who had either the most feeling or the least dissimulation, "allow me to congratulate you; this is a very unhopèd-for conclusion of a very disagreeable affair."

Albert remained silent and wrapped in thought. Château-Renaud contented himself with tapping his boot with his flexible cane. "Are we not going?" said he, after this embarrassing silence.—"When you please," replied Beauchamp; "allow me only to compliment M. de Morcerf, who has given proof to-day of such chivalric generosity, so rare."

"Oh, yes," said Château-Renaud.

"It is magnificent," continued Beauchamp, "to be able to exercise so much self-control!"—"Assuredly; as for me, I should have been incapable of it," said Château-Renaud, with most significant coolness.

"Gentlemen," interrupted Albert, "I think you did not understand that something very serious had passed between M. de Monte-Cristo and myself."—"Possibly, possibly," said Beauchamp, immediately; "but every simpleton would not be able to understand your heroism, and sooner or later you will find yourself compelled to explain it to them more energetically than would be convenient to your bodily health and the duration of your life. May I give you a friendly counsel? Set out for Naples, the Hague, or St. Petersburg—calm countries, where the point of honour is better understood than among our hot-headed Parisians. Seek quietude and oblivion, so that you may return peaceably to France after a few years. Am I not right, M. de Château-Renaud?"

"That is quite my opinion," said the gentleman; "nothing induces serious duels so much as a fruitless one."—"Thank you, gentlemen," replied Albert, with a smile of indifference; "I shall follow your advice—not because you give it, but because I had before intended to quit France. I thank you equally for the service you have rendered me in being my seconds. It is deeply engraved on my heart, since, after what you have just said, I remember that only." Château-Renaud and Beauchamp looked at each other; the impression was the same on both of them, and the tone in which Morcerf had just expressed his thanks was so determined that the position would have become embarrassing for all if the conversation had continued.

"Farewell, Albert," said Beauchamp suddenly, carelessly extending his hand to the young man, without the latter appearing to rouse from his lethargy; in fact, he did not notice the offered hand. "Farewell," said Château-Renaud in his turn, keeping the little cane in his left hand, and bowing with his right. Albert's lips scarcely whispered "Farewell," but his look was more explicit: it embraced a whole poem of restrained anger, proud disdain, and generous indignation. He preserved his melancholy and motionless position for some time after his two friends had regained

calm and serene look formed a singular contrast to Albert's grief-stricken face, who approached also, followed by the four young people.

When at three paces distant, Albert and the count stopped.

"Approach, gentlemen," said Albert; "I wish you not to lose one word of what I am about to have the honour of saying to the count of Monte-Cristo; for it must be repeated by you to all who will listen to it, strange as it may appear to you."—"Proceed, sir," said the count.

"Sir," said Albert, at first with a tremulous voice, but which gradually became firmer; "I reproached you with exposing the conduct of M. de Morcerf in Epirus, for, guilty as I knew he was, I thought you had no right to punish him; but I have since learned you have that right. It is not Fernand Mondego's treachery towards Ali Pacha which induces me so readily to excuse you, but the treachery of the fisherman Fernand towards you, and the almost unheard-of miseries which were its consequences; and I say, and proclaim it publicly, that you were justified in revenging yourself on my father; and I, his son, thank you for not using greater severity." Had a thunderbolt fallen in the midst of the spectators of this unexpected scene, it would not have surprised them more than did Albert's declaration. As for Monte-Cristo, his eyes slowly rose towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. He could not understand how Albert's fiery nature, of which he had seen so much among the Roman bandits, had suddenly stooped to this humiliation. He recognised the influence of Mercédès, and saw why her noble heart had not opposed the sacrifice she knew beforehand would be useless. "Now, sir," said Albert, "if you think my apology sufficient, pray give me your hand. Next to the merit of infallibility which you appear to possess, I rank that of candidly acknowledging a fault. But this confession concerns me only. I acted well as a man, but you have acted better than man. An angel alone could have saved one of us from death—that angel came from heaven, if not to make us friends (which, alas! fatality renders impossible), at least to make us esteem each other."

Monte-Cristo, with moistened eye, heaving breast, and lips half open, extended to Albert a hand, which the latter pressed with a sentiment resembling respectful fear. "Gentlemen," said he, "M. de Monte-Cristo receives my apology; I had acted hastily towards him. Hasty actions are generally bad ones. Now my fault is repaired. I hope the world will not call me cowardly for acting as my conscience dictated. But if any one should entertain a false opinion of me," added he, drawing himself up as if he would challenge both friends and enemies, "I shall endeavour to correct his mistake."—"What has, then, happened during the night?" asked Beauchamp of Château-Renaud; "we appear to make a very sorry figure here."

"In truth, what Albert has just done is either very despicable or very noble," replied the baron.—"What can it mean?" said Debray to Franz. "The count of Monte-Cristo acts dishonourably to M. de Morcerf, and is justified by his son! Had I ten Yaninas in my family, I should only consider myself the more bound to fight ten times." As for Monte-Cristo, his head was bent down, his arms were powerless; bowing under the weight of twenty-four years' reminiscences, he thought not of Albert, of Beauchamp, of Château-Renaud, or of any of that group; but he thought of that courageous woman who had come to plead for her son's life, to whom he had offered his, and who had now saved it by the revelation of a dreadful family secret, capable of destroying for ever, in that young man's heart, every feeling of filial piety.

"I also," replied Mercédès, "am going, and I acknowledge I had depended on your accompanying me; have I deceived myself?"

"My mother," said Albert, with firmness, "I cannot make you share the fate I have planned for myself. I must live henceforth without rank and fortune, and to begin this hard apprenticeship I must borrow from a friend the loaf I shall eat until I have earned one. So, my dear mother, I am going at once to ask Franz to lend me the small sum I shall require to supply my present wants."

"You, my poor child, suffer poverty and hunger! Oh, say not so; it will break my resolutions."

"But not mine, mother," replied Albert. "I am young and strong, I believe I am courageous, and since yesterday I have learned the power of will. Alas! my dear mother, some have suffered so much, and yet live, and have raised a new fortune on the ruin of all the promises of happiness which Heaven had made them—on the fragments of all the hope which God had given them! I have seen that, my mother; I know that from the gulf in which their enemies have plunged them they have risen with so much vigour and glory that in their turn they have ruled their former conquerors, and have punished them. No, my mother; from this moment I have done with the past, and accept nothing from it—not even a name, because you can understand your son cannot bear the name of a man who ought to blush before another."

"Albert, my child," said Mercédès, "if I had a stronger heart, that is the counsel I would have given you; your conscience has spoken when my voice became too weak; listen to its dictates. You had friends, Albert; break off their acquaintance. But do not despair; you have life before you, my dear Albert, for you are yet scarcely twenty-two years old; and as a pure heart like yours wants a spotless name, take my father's—it was Herrera. I am sure, my Albert, whatever may be your career, you will soon render that name illustrious. Then, my friend, return to the world still more brilliant from the reflection of your former sorrows; and if I am wrong, still let me cherish these hopes, for I have no future to look forward to: for me the grave opens when I pass the threshold of this house."

"I will fulfil all your wishes, my dear mother," said the young man. "Yes, I share your hopes; the anger of Heaven will not pursue us—you so pure, and me so innocent. But since our resolution is formed, let us act promptly. M. de Morcerf went out about half an hour since; the opportunity is favourable to avoid an explanation."—"I am ready, my son," said Mercédès. Albert ran to fetch a hackney-coach; he recollected there was a small furnished house to let in the Rue de Saints-Pères, where his mother would find a humble but decent lodging, and thither he intended conducting the countess. As the hackney-coach stopped at the door, and Albert was alighting, a man approached, and gave him a letter. Albert recognised the bearer. "From the count," said Bertuccio. Albert took the letter, opened it, and read it; then looked round for Bertuccio, but he was gone. He returned to Mercédès, with tears in his eyes and heaving breast, and, without uttering a word, he gave her the letter. Mercédès read:

ALBERT.—While showing you that I have discovered your plans, I hope also to convince you of my delicacy. You are free, you leave the count's hotel, and you take your mother to your home; but reflect, Albert, you owe her more than your poor noble heart can pay her. Keep the

struggle for yourself, bear all the suffering, but spare her the trial of poverty which must accompany your first efforts ; for she deserves not even the shadow of the misfortune which has this day fallen on her, and Providence wills not the innocent should suffer for the guilty. I know you are going to leave the Rue du Helder without taking anything with you ; do not seek to know how I discovered it ; I know it—that is sufficient. Now, listen, Albert. Twenty-four years ago I returned, proud and joyful, to my country. I had a betrothed, Albert, a lovely girl, whom I adored, and I was bringing to my betrothed a hundred and fifty louis, painfully amassed by ceaseless toil. This money was for her ; I destined it for her, and, knowing the treachery of the sea, I buried our treasure in the little garden of the house my father lived in at Marseilles, on the Allées de Meillan. Your mother, Albert, knows that poor house well. A short time since, I passed through Marseilles, and went to see the old house, which revived so many painful recollections, and in the evening I took a spade and dug in the corner of the garden, where I had concealed my treasure. The iron box was there—no one had touched it ! it was under a beautiful fig-tree my father had planted the day I was born, which overshadowed the spot. Well, Albert, this money, which was formerly designed to promote the comfort and tranquillity of the woman I adored, may now, from a strange and painful circumstance, be devoted to the same purpose. Oh, feel for me, who could offer millions to that poor woman, but who return her only the piece of black bread, forgotten under my poor roof since the day I was torn from her I loved. You are a generous man, Albert, but perhaps you may be blinded by pride or resentment ; if you refuse me, if you ask another for what I have a right to offer you, I will say it is ungenerous of you to refuse the life of your mother at the hands of a man whose father was allowed to die in all the horrors of poverty and despair by your father."

Albert stood pale and motionless to hear what his mother would decide after she had finished reading this letter. Mercédès turned her eyes with an ineffable look towards heaven. "I accept it," said she ; "he has a right to pay the dowry, which I shall take with me to some convent !" Putting the letter in her bosom, she took her son's arm, and, with a firmer step than she even herself expected, she went downstairs.

CHAPTER XCII.

THE SUICIDE.

MEANWHILE Monte-Cristo had also returned to town with Emmanuel and Maximilian. Their return was cheerful. Emmanuel did not conceal his joy at having seen peace succeed to war, and acknowledged aloud his philanthropic tastes. Morrel, in a corner of the carriage, allowed his brother-in-law's gaiety to expend itself in words, while he felt equal inward joy, which, however, betrayed itself only by his look. At the Barrière du Trône they met Bertuccio, who was waiting there, motionless as a sentinel at his post. Monte-Cristo put his head out of the window, exchanged a few words with him in a low tone, and the steward disappeared. "M. le Comte," said Emmanuel, when they were at the end of the Place Royale, "put me down at my door, that my wife may not have a single moment of needless anxiety on my account or yours."

"If it were not ridiculous to make a display of our triumph, I would

invite the count to our house ; besides that, he doubtless has some trembling heart to comfort. So we will take leave of our friend, and let him hasten home."—"Stop a moment," said Monte-Cristo, "do not let me lose both my companions ; return, Emmanuel, to your charming wife, and present my best compliments to her, and do you, Morrel, accompany me to the Champs Elysées."

"Willingly," said Maximilian ; "particularly as I have business in that quarter."—"Shall we wait breakfast for you?" asked Emmanuel.

"No," replied the young man. The door was closed, and the carriage proceeded. "See what good fortune I brought you !" said Morrel, when he was alone with the count. "Have you not thought so?"

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "for that reason I wished to keep you near me."

"It is miraculous !" continued Morrel, answering his own thoughts.

"What?" said Monte-Cristo.—"What has just happened?"

"Yes," said the count, "you are right—it is miraculous."

"For Albert is brave," resumed Morrel.—"Very brave," said Monte-Cristo ; "I have seen him sleep with a sword suspended over his head."

"And I know he has fought two duels," said Morrel ; "how can you reconcile that with his conduct this morning?"

"All owing to your influence," replied Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"It is well for Albert he is not in the army," said Morrel.—"Why?"

"An apology on the ground?" said the young captain, shaking his head.

"Come," said the count, mildly, "do not entertain the prejudices of ordinary men, Morrel ! Acknowledge, if Albert is brave, he cannot be a coward ; he must then have had some reason for acting as he did this morning, and confess that his conduct is more heroic than otherwise."

"Doubtless, doubtless," said Morrel ; "but I shall say, like the Spaniard,

carriage-door, Morrel sprang out on the pavement, Bertuccio was waiting on the steps. Morrel disappeared through the avenue of Marigny, and Monte-Cristo hastened to join Bertuccio.

"Well?" asked he.

"She is going to leave her house," said the steward. "And her son?"

"Florentin, his valet, thinks he is going to do the same."

"Come this way." Monte-Cristo took Bertuccio into his cabinet, wrote the letter we have seen, and gave it to the steward. "Go," said he quickly. "*Apropos*, let Haydée be informed I am returned."

"Here I am," said the young girl, who, at the sound of the carriage, had run down-stairs, and whose face was radiant with joy at seeing the count return safely. Bertuccio left. Every transport of a daughter finding a father, all the delight of a mistress seeing an adored lover, were felt by Haydée during the first moments of this meeting, which she had so eagerly expected. Doubtless, although less evident, Monte-Cristo's joy was not less intense; joy to hearts which have suffered long is like the dew on the ground after a long drought; both the heart and the ground absorb that beneficent moisture falling on them, and nothing is outwardly apparent.

Monte-Cristo was beginning to think, what he had not for a long time dared to believe, that there were two *Mercédès* in the world, and he might yet be happy. His eye, elate with happiness, was reading eagerly the moistened gaze of Haydée, when suddenly the door opened. The count knit his brow. "*M. de Morcerf!*" said Baptistin, as if that name sufficed for his excuse. In fact, the count's face brightened.

"Which," asked he, "the viscount or the count?"—"The count."

"Oh!" exclaimed Haydée, "is it not yet over?"

"I know not if it is finished, my beloved child," said Monte-Cristo, taking the young girl's hands; "but I do know you have nothing more to fear."

"But it is the wretched——"

"That man cannot injure me, Haydée," said Monte-Cristo; "it was his son alone there was cause to fear."—"And what I have suffered," said the young girl, "you shall never know, my lord." Monte-Cristo smiled. "By my father's tomb!" said he, extending his hand over the head of the young girl, "I swear to you, Haydée, that if any misfortune happens, it will not be to me."—"I believe you, my lord, as implicitly as if God had spoken to me," said the young girl, presenting her forehead to him. Monte-Cristo pressed on that pure beautiful forehead a kiss which made two hearts throb at once, the one violently, the other secretly. "Oh!" murmured the count, "shall I then be permitted to love again? Ask *M. de Morcerf* into the drawing-room," said he to Baptistin, while he led the beautiful Greek girl to a private staircase.

We must explain this visit, which, although Monte-Cristo expected, is unexpected to our readers. While *Mercédès*, as we have said, was making a similar inventory of her property to Albert's, while she was arranging her jewels, shutting her drawers, collecting her keys, to leave everything in perfect order, she did not perceive a pale and sinister face at a glass door which threw light into the passage, from which everything could be both seen and heard. He who was thus looking, without being heard or seen, probably heard and saw all that passed in *Madame de Morcerf's* apartments. From that glass door the pale-faced man went to the count's bedroom, and raised, with a contracted hand, the curtain of a window overlooking the court-yard. He remained there ten minutes, motionless and dumb, listening to the beating of his own heart. For him those ten

minutes were very long. It was then Albert, returned from his rendezvous, perceived his father watching for his arrival behind a curtain, and turned aside. The count's eye expanded; he knew Albert had insulted the count dreadfully, and that, in every country in the world, such an insult would lead to a deadly duel. Albert returned safely—then the count was revenged.

An indescribable ray of joy illumined that wretched countenance, like the last ray of the sun before it disappears behind a mass of clouds which appear more like its tomb than its couch. But as we have said, he waited in vain for his son to come to his apartment with the account of his triumph. He easily understood why his son did not come to see him before he went to avenge his father's honour; but when that was done, why did not his son come and throw himself into his arms?

It was then, when the count could not see Albert, he sent for his servant, whom he knew was authorised not to conceal anything from him. Ten minutes afterwards, the General Morcerf was seen on the steps in a black coat with a military collar, black pantaloons, and black gloves. He had apparently given previous orders; for, as he reached the bottom step, his carriage came from the coach-house ready for him. The valet threw into the carriage his military cloak, in which two swords were wrapped; and shutting the door, he took his seat by the side of the coachman. The coachman stooped down for his orders.

"To the Champs Elysées," said the general; "the count of Monte-Cristo's. Quickly!" The horses bounded beneath the whip, and, in five minutes, they stopped before the count's door. M. de Morcerf opened the door himself; and, as the carriage rolled away, he passed up the walk, rang, and entered the open door with his servant.

A moment afterwards, Baptistin announced the count de Morcerf to M. de Monte-Cristo; and the latter, leading Haydée aside, ordered the count de Morcerf to be asked into the drawing-room. The general was pacing the room the third time, when, in turning, he perceived Monte-Cristo at the door. "Eh! it is M. de Morcerf," said Monte-Cristo, quietly; "I thought I had heard wrong."—"Yes, it is I," said the count, whom a frightful contraction of the lips prevented from articulating freely.

"May I know the cause which procures me the pleasure of seeing M. de Morcerf so early?"—"Had you not a meeting with my son this morning?" asked the general.

"I had," replied the count.

"And I know my son had good reasons to wish to fight with you, and to endeavour to kill you."—"Yes, sir, he had very good ones; but you see, in spite of them, he has not killed me, and did not even fight."

"Yet he considered you the cause of his father's dishonour, the cause of the fearful ruin which has fallen on my house."

"Truly, sir," said Monte-Cristo, with his dreadful calmness, "a secondary cause, but not the principal."

"Doubtless you made, then, some apology or explanation?"

"I explained nothing, and it is he who apologised to me."

"But to what do you attribute this conduct?"

"To the conviction, probably, that there was one more guilty than me."

"And who was that?"—"His father."

"That may be," said the count, turning pale; "but, you know, the guilty do not like to find themselves convicted."

"I know it. And I expected this result."

"You expected my son would be a coward," cried the count.

"M. Albert de Morcerf is no coward!" said Monte-Cristo.

"A man who holds a sword in his hand, and sees a mortal enemy within reach of that sword, and does not fight, is a coward! Why is he not here, that I may tell him so?"—"Sir," replied Monte-Cristo, coldly, "I did not expect you had come here to relate to me your little family affairs. Go and tell M. Albert that, and he may know what to answer you."

"Oh, no, no!" said the general, smiling faintly, "I did not come for that purpose; you are right! I came to tell you that I also look upon you as my enemy! I came to tell you I hate you instinctively! That it seems as if I had always known you, and always hated you; and, in short, since the young people of the present day will not fight, it remains for us to do it. Do you think so, sir?"—"Certainly. And when I told you I had foreseen the result, it is the honour of your visit I alluded to."

"So much the better. Are you prepared?"—"Yes, sir."

"You know that we shall fight till one of us is dead!" said the general, whose teeth were clenched with rage.—"Until one of us dies," repeated Monte-Cristo, moving his head slightly up and down.

"Let us start, then; we need no witnesses."—"Truly," said Monte-Cristo, "it is unnecessary, we know each other so well!"

"On the contrary," said the count, "we know so little of each other."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, with the same indomitable coolness; "let us see. Are you not the soldier Fernand who deserted on the eve of the battle of Waterloo? Are you not the Lieutenant Fernand who served as guide and spy to the French army in Spain? Are you not the Captain Fernand who betrayed, sold, and murdered his benefactor, Ali? And have not all these Fernands, united, made the Lieutenant-General de Morcerf, peer of France?"

"Oh!" cried the general, as if branded with a hot iron, "wretch! to reproach me with my shame, when about, perhaps, to kill me! No, I did not say I was a stranger to you; I know well, demon, that you have penetrated into the darkness of the past, and that you have read, by the light of what flambeau I know not, every page of my life: but, perhaps, I may be more honourable in my shame than you under your pompous coverings. No—no, I am aware you know me; but I know you not, adventurer, sewn up in gold and jewellery. You have called yourself, at Paris, the count of Monte-Cristo; in Italy, Sinbad the Sailor; in Malta, I forget what. But it is your real name I want to know, in the midst of your hundred names, that I may pronounce it when we meet to fight, at the moment when I plunge my sword through your heart."

The count of Monte-Cristo turned dreadfully pale, his eye seemed to burn with a devouring fire; he bounded towards a dressing-room near his bedroom, and, in less than a moment, tearing off his cravat, his coat and waistcoat, he put on a sailor's jacket and hat, from beneath which rolled his long black hair. He returned thus, formidable and implacable, advancing with his arms crossed on his breast, towards the general, who could not understand why he had disappeared; but who on seeing him again, and feeling his teeth chatter and his legs sink under him, drew back, and only stopped when he found a table to support his clenched hand. "Fernand," cried he, "of my hundred names I need only tell you one, to overwhelm you! But you guess it now; do you not?—or, rather, you remember it? For, notwithstanding all my sorrows and my tortures, I show you to-day a face which the happiness of revenge makes young again—a face you must often have seen in your dreams since your marriage with Mercédès, my betrothed!"

The general, with his head thrown back, hands extended, gaze fixed, looked silently at this dreadful apparition ; then seeking the wall to support him, he glided along close to it until he reached the door, through which he went out backwards, uttering this single mournful, lamentable, distressing cry,—“Edmond Dantès !” Then, with sighs which were unlike any human sound, he dragged himself to the door, reeled across the courtyard, and falling into the arms of his valet, he said, in a voice scarcely intelligible,—“Home ! home !” The fresh air, and the shame he felt at having exposed himself before his servants, partially recalled his senses ; but the ride was short, and as he drew near his house all his wretchedness revived. He stopped at a short distance from the house and alighted. The door of the hotel was wide open, a hackney-coach was standing in the middle of the yard—a strange sight before so noble a mansion ; the count looked at it with terror ; but without daring to ask, he rushed towards his apartment. Two persons were coming down the stairs : he had only time to creep into a cabinet to avoid them. It was Mercédès leaning on her son’s arm and leaving the hotel. They passed close by the unhappy being, who, concealed behind the damask door, almost felt Mercédès’ dress brush past him, and his son’s warm breath pronouncing these words,—“Courage, my mother ! Come, this is no longer our home !” The words died away, the steps were lost in the distance. The general drew himself up, clinging to the door ; he uttered the most dreadful sob which ever escaped from the bosom of a father abandoned at the same time by his wife and son. He soon heard the clatter of the iron step of the hackney-coach, then the coachman’s voice, and then the rolling of the heavy vehicle shook the windows. He darted to his bedroom to see once more all he had loved in the world ; but the hackney-coach drove on without the head of either Mercédès or her son appearing at the window to take a last look at the house or the deserted father or husband. And at the very moment when the wheels of that coach crossed the gateway a report was heard, and a thick smoke escaped through one of the panes of the window, which was broken by the explosion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VALENTINE.

WE may easily conceive where Morrel’s appointment was. On leaving Monte-Cristo he walked slowly towards Villefort’s ; we say slowly, for Morrel had more than half-an-hour to spare to go five hundred steps, but he had hastened to take leave of Monte-Cristo because he wished to be alone with his thoughts. He knew his time well—the hour when Valentine was giving Noirtier his breakfast, and was sure not to be disturbed in the performance of this pious duty. Noirtier and Valentine had given him leave to go twice a week, and he was now availing himself of that permission. He arrived ; Valentine was expecting him. Uneasy and almost wandering, she seized his hand and led him to her grandfather. This uneasiness, amounting almost to wildness, arose from the report Morcel’s adventure had made in the world ; the affair of the opera was generally known. No one at Villefort’s doubted that a duel would ensue from it. Valentine, with her woman’s instinct, guessed that Morrel would be Monte-Cristo’s witness, and from the young man’s well-known courage and his great affection for the count, she feared he would not content himself with the passive part assigned to him. We may easily understand how eagerly the par-

ticulars were asked for, given, and received ; and Morrel could read an indescribable joy in the eyes of his beloved, when she knew that the termination of this affair was as happy as it was unexpected.

"Now," said Valentine, motioning to Morrel to sit down near her grandfather, while she took her seat on his footstool, "now let us talk about our own affairs. You know, Maximilian, grandpapa once thought of leaving this house, and taking an apartment away from M. de Villefort's."—"Yes," said Maximilian, "I recollect the project, of which I highly approved."

"Well," said Valentine, "you may approve again, for grandpapa is again thinking of it."—"Bravo !" said Maximilian. "And do you know," said Valentine, "what reason grandpapa gives for leaving this house." Noirtier looked at Valentine to impose silence, but she did not notice him ; her looks, her eyes, her smile, were all for Morrel.

"Oh ! whatever may be M. Noirtier's reason," answered Morrel, "I will readily believe it to be a good one."—"An excellent one !" said Valentine. "He pretends the air of the Faubourg St. Honoré is not good for me."

"Indeed !" said Morrel ; "in that M. Noirtier may be right ; your health has not appeared good the last fortnight."—"Not very," said Valentine. "And grandpapa is become my physician ; and I have the greatest confidence in him, because he knows everything."

"Do you then really suffer ?" asked Morrel, quickly.

"Oh, it must not be called suffering ; I feel a general uneasiness, that is all. I have lost my appetite, and my stomach feels to be struggling to become accustomed to something." Noirtier did not lose a word of what Valentine said. "And what treatment do you adopt for this singular complaint ?"—"A very simple one," said Valentine. "I swallow every morning a spoonful of the mixture prepared for my grandfather. When I say one spoonful, I began by one—now I take four. Grandpapa says it is a panacea." Valentine smiled, but it was evident she suffered.

Maximilian, in his devotedness, gazed silently at her. She was very beautiful, but her usual paleness had increased ; her eyes were more brilliant than ever, and her hands, which were generally white like mother-of-pearl, now more resembled wax, to which time was adding a yellowish hue. From Valentine the young man looked towards Noirtier. The latter watched with strange and deep interest the young girl, absorbed by her affection ; and he also, like Morrel, followed those traces of inward suffering, which were so little perceptible to a common observer, they escaped the notice of every one but the grandfather and the lover.

"But," said Morrel, "I thought this mixture, of which you now take four spoonfuls, was prepared for M. Noirtier?"—"I know it is very bitter," said Valentine ; "so bitter, that all I drink afterwards appears to have the same taste." Noirtier looked inquiringly at his granddaughter. "Yes ; grandpapa," said Valentine ; "it is so. Just now, before I came down to you, I drank a glass of *eau sucrée* ; I left half, because it seemed so bitter." Noirtier turned pale, and made a sign that he wished to speak. Valentine rose to fetch the dictionary. Noirtier watched her with evident anguish. In fact, the blood was rushing to the young girl's head already, her cheeks were becoming red. "Oh !" cried she, without losing any of her cheerfulness, "this is singular ! A dimness ! Did the sun shine in my eyes." And she leaned against the window.

"The sun is not shining," said Morrel, more alarmed by Noirtier's expression than by Valentine's indisposition. He ran towards her. The

young girl smiled. "Comfort yourself!" said she to Noirtier. "Do not be alarmed, Maximilian; it is nothing, and has already passed away. But listen! Do I not hear a carriage in the courtyard?" She opened Noirtier's door, ran to a window in the passage, and returned hastily. "Yes," said she, "it is Madame Danglars and her daughter, who are come to call on us. Good-bye! I must run away, for they would send here for me; or, rather, farewell till I see you again. Stay with grandpapa, Maximilian; I promise you not to persuade them to stay."

Morrel watched her as she left the room; he heard her ascend the little staircase which led both to Madame de Villefort's apartments and to hers. As soon as she was gone, Noirtier made a sign to Morrel to take the dictionary. Morrel obeyed; guided by Valentine, he had learned how to understand the old man quickly. Accustomed, however, as he was, and having to repeat most of the letters of the alphabet, and to find every word in the dictionary, it was ten minutes before the thought of the old man was translated by these words, "Fetch the glass of water and the decanter from Valentine's room." Morrel rang immediately for the servant who had taken Barrois' situation, and in Noirtier's name gave that order. The servant soon returned. The decanter and the glass were completely empty. Noirtier made a sign that he wished to speak. "Why are the glass and decanter empty?" asked he; "Valentine said she only drank half the glassful." The translation of this new question occupied another five minutes. "I do not know," said the servant, "but the housemaid is in Mademoiselle Valentine's room; perhaps she has emptied them."—"Ask her," said Morrel, translating Noirtier's thought this time by his look. The servant went out, but returned almost immediately. "Mademoiselle Valentine passed through the room to go to Madame de Villefort's," said he; "and in passing, as she was thirsty, she drank what remained in the glass; as for the decanter, M. Edward had emptied that to make a pond for his ducks." Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven, as a gambler does who stakes his all on one stroke. From that moment the old man's eyes were fixed on the door, and did not quit it.

It was indeed Madame Danglars and her daughter whom Valentine had seen; they had been ushered into Madame de Villefort's room, who had said she would receive them there. That is why Valentine passed through her room, which was on a level with Valentine's, and only separated from it by Edward's. The two ladies entered the drawing-room with that sort of official stiffness which announced a communication. Between worldly people a shadow is soon caught. Madame de Villefort received them with equal solemnity. Valentine entered at this moment, and the formalities were resumed. "My dear friend," said the baroness, while the two young people were shaking hands, "I and Eugénie are come to be the first to announce to you the approaching marriage of my daughter with Prince Cavalcanti." Danglars kept up the title of prince. The popular banker found it answered better than count. "Allow me to present you my sincere congratulations," replied Madame de Villefort. "M. le Prince Cavalcanti appears a young man of rare qualities."

"Listen," said the baroness, smiling; "speaking to you as a friend, I would say, the prince does not yet appear all he will be. He has about him a little of that foreign manner by which French persons recognize, at first sight, the Italian or German nobleman. Besides, he gives evidence of great kindness of disposition, much keenness of wit, and as to suitability, M. Danglars assures me his fortune is majestic—that is his term."

—"And then," said Eugénie, while turning over the leaves of Madame de Villefort's album, "add that you have taken a great fancy to the young man."

"And," said Madame de Villefort, "I need not ask you if you share that fancy."—"I!" replied Eugénie, with her usual candour. "Oh, not the least in the world, madame! My wish was not to confine myself to domestic cares, or the caprices of any man, but to be an artist, and, consequently, free in heart, in person, and in thought." Eugénie pronounced these words with so firm a tone that the colour mounted to Valentine's cheeks. The timid girl could not understand that vigorous nature which appeared to have none of the timidities of woman.

"At any rate," said she, "since I am to be married whether I will or not, I ought to be thankful to Providence for having released me from my engagement with M. Albert de Morcerf, or I should this day have been the wife of a dishonoured man."—"It is true," said the baroness, with that strange simplicity sometimes met with among fashionable ladies, and of which plebeian intercourse can never entirely deprive them,—"it is very true that, had not the Morcerfs hesitated, my daughter would have married that M. Albert. The general depended much on it; he even came to force M. Danglars. We have had a narrow escape."

"But," said Valentine, timidly, "does all the father's shame revert upon the son? M. Albert appears to me quite innocent of the treason charged against the general."—"Excuse me," said the implacable young girl, "M. Albert claims and well deserves his share. It appears that after having challenged M. de Monte-Cristo at the Opera yesterday, he apologized on the ground to-day."

"Impossible!" said Madame de Villefort.

"Ah, my dear friend," said Madame Danglars, with the same simplicity we before noticed, "it is a fact! I heard it from M. Debray, who was present at the explanation." Valentine also knew the truth, but she did not answer. A single word had reminded her that Morrel was expecting her in M. Noirtier's room. Deeply engaged with a sort of inward contemplation, Valentine had ceased for a moment to join in the conversation. She would, indeed, have found it impossible to repeat what had been said the last few minutes, when suddenly Madame Danglars' hand, pressed on her arm, aroused her from her lethargy.

"What is it?" said she, starting at Madame Danglars' touch as she would have done from an electric shock. "It is, my dear Valentine," said the baroness, "that you are, doubtless, suffering."—"I?" said the young girl, passing her hand across her burning forehead.

"Yes, look at yourself in that glass: you have turned pale and red successively, three or four times in one minute."

"Indeed," cried Eugénie, "you are very pale!"—"Oh, do not be alarmed! I have been so for some days." Artless as she was, the young girl knew this was an opportunity to leave; besides, Madame de Villefort came to her assistance. "Retire, Valentine," said she; "you are really suffering, and these ladies will excuse you; drink a glass of pure water, it will restore you." Valentine kissed Eugénie, bowed to Madame Danglars, who had already risen to take her leave, and went out. "That poor child," said Madame de Villefort, when Valentine was gone, "she makes me very uneasy, and I should not be astonished if she had some serious illness."

Meanwhile, Valentine, in a sort of excitement which she could not quite understand, had crossed Edward's room without noticing some trick of

the child, and through her own had reached the little staircase. She was at the bottom excepting three steps ; she already heard Morrel's voice, when suddenly a cloud passed over her eyes, her stiffened foot missed the step, her hands had no power to hold the baluster, and, falling against the wall, she rolled down these three steps rather than walked. Morrel bounded to the door, opened it, and found Valentine extended on the floor. Rapid as lightning, he raised her in his arms and placed her in a chair. Valentine opened her eyes.

"Oh, what a clumsy thing I am!" said she, with feverish volubility; "I no longer know my way. I forgot there were three more steps before the landing."—"You have hurt yourself, perhaps," said Morrel. "What can I do for you, Valentine?" Valentine looked round her; she saw the deepest terror depicted in Noirtier's eyes. "Comfort yourself, dear grandpapa," said [she, endeavouring to smile; "it is nothing—it is nothing; I was giddy, that is all."—"Another giddiness!" said Morrel, clasping his hands. "Oh, attend to it, Valentine, I entreat you."—"But no," said Valentine,—"no, I tell you it is all past, and it was nothing. Now, let me tell you some news: Eugénie is to be married in a week, and in three days there is to be a grand feast, a sort of betrothing festival. We are all invited, my father, Madame de Villefort, and I—at least, I understood it so."—"When will it, then, be our turn to think of these things? Oh, Valentine, you, who have so much influence over your grandpapa, try to make him answer—Soon."

"And do you," said Valentine, "depend on me to stimulate the tardiness and arouse the memory of grandpapa?"—"Yes," cried Morrel, "be quick! So long as you are not mine, Valentine, I shall always think I may lose you."

"Oh!" replied Valentine, with a convulsive movement, "Oh! indeed. Maximilian, you are too timid for an officer, for a soldier who, they say, never knows fear. Ah! ah! ah!" She burst into a forced and melancholy laugh, her arms stiffened and twisted, her head fell back on her chair, and she remained motionless. The cry of terror which was stopped on Noirtier's lips, seemed to start from his eyes. Morrel understood it: he knew he must call assistance. The young man rang the bell violently; the housemaid who had been in Mademoiselle Valentine's room, and the servant who had replaced Barrois, ran in at the same moment. Valentine was so pale, so cold, so inanimate, that, without listening to what was said to them, they were seized with the fear which pervaded that house, and they flew into the passage crying for help. Madame Danglars and Eugénie were going out at that moment; they heard the cause of the disturbance.

"I told you so!" cried Madame de Villefort. "Poor child!"

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE CONFESSION.

At the same moment M. de Villefort's voice was heard calling from his cabinet, "What is the matter?" Morrel consulted Noirtier's look, who had recovered his self-command, and with a glance indicated the closet where, once before, under somewhat similar circumstances, he had taken refuge. He had only time to get his hat, and throw himself breathless into the closet; the procureur's footstep was heard in the passage. Villefort sprang into the room, ran to Valentine, and took her in his arms. "A

physician ! a physician ! M. d'Avrigny !" cried Villefort ; " or rather I will go for him myself." He flew from the apartment, and Morrel, at the same moment, darted out at the other door. He had been struck to the heart by a frightful recollection—the conversation he had heard between the doctor and Villefort the night of Madame de Saint-Méran's death, recurred to him ; these symptoms, to a less alarming extent, were the same which had preceded the death of Barrois. At the same time Monte-Cristo's voice seemed to resound in his ear, who had said, only two hours before, "Whatever you want, Morrel, come to me ; I have great power." More rapidly than thought, he darted down the Rue Matignon, and thence to the Avenue des Champs Elysées.

Meanwhile M. de Villefort arrived in a hired cabriolet at M. d'Avrigny's door. He rang so violently that the porter came alarmed. Villefort ran upstairs without saying a word. The porter knew him, and let him pass, only calling to him, " In his cabinet, M. le Procureur du Roi—in his cabinet !" Villefort pushed, or rather forced, the door open. " Ah !" said the doctor, " is it you ?"—" Yes," said Villefort, closing the door after him, " it is I, who am come in my turn to ask you if we are quite alone. Doctor, my house is accursed !"

" What !" said the latter, with apparent coolness, but with deep emotion, " have you another invalid ?"—" Yes, doctor," cried Villefort, seizing, with a convulsive grasp, a handful of hair, " yes !"

D'Avrigny's look implied, " I told you it would be so." Then he slowly uttered these words, " Who is now dying in your house ? What new victim is going to accuse you of weakness before God ?" A mournful sob burst from Villefort's heart ; he approached the doctor, and seizing his arm,— " Valentine !" said he, " it is Valentine's turn !"

" Your daughter !" cried D'Avrigny, with grief and surprise.

" You see you were deceived," murmured the magistrate ; " come and see her, and on her bed of agony entreat her pardon for having suspected her."—" Each time you have applied to me," said the doctor, " it has been too late : still I will go. But let us make haste, sir ; with the enemies you have to do with there is no time to be lost."

" Oh ! this time, doctor, you shall not have to reproach me with weakness. This time I will know the assassin, and will pursue him."—" Let us try first to save the victim before we think of revenging her," said D'Avrigny. " Come." The same cabriolet which had brought Villefort took them back at full speed, at the same moment when Morrel rapped at Monte-Cristo's door. The count was in his cabinet, and was reading, with an angry look, something which Bertuccio had brought in haste. Hearing Morrel announced, who had left him only two hours before, the count raised his head. He, as well as the count, had evidently been much tried during those two hours, for he had left him smiling, and returned with a disturbed air. The count rose, and sprang to meet him. " What is the matter, Maximilian ?" asked he ; " you are pale, and the perspiration rolls from your forehead." Morrel fell, rather than sat, down on a chair. " Yes," said he, " I came quickly ; I wanted to speak to you."—" Is all your family well ?" asked the count, with an affectionate benevolence, whose sincerity no one could for a moment doubt.

" Thank you, count—thank you," said the young man, evidently embarrassed how to begin the conversation ; " yes, every one in my family is well."—" So much the better ; yet you have something to tell me ?" replied the count, with increased anxiety.

" Yes," said Morrel, " it is true ; I have just left a house where death has

just entered, to run to you."—"Are you then come from M. de Morcerf's?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"No," said Morrel; "is some one dead in his house?"

"The general has just blown his brains out," replied Monte-Cristo, with great coolness.

"Oh! what a dreadful event!" cried Maximilian.

"Not for the countess, nor for Albert," said Monte-Cristo; "a dead father or husband is better than a dishonoured one: blood washes out shame."—"Poor countess!" said Maximilian, "I pity her very much; she is so noble a woman!"

"Pity Albert also, Maximilian; for, believe me, he is the worthy son of the countess. But let us return to yourself: you have hastened to me; can I have the happiness of being useful to you?"—"Yes, I need your help; that is, I thought, like a madman, you could lend me your assistance in a case where God alone can succour me."

"Tell me what it is," replied Monte-Cristo.

"Oh!" said Morrel, "I know not, indeed, if I may reveal this secret to mortal ears; but fatality impels me, necessity constrains me, count—" Morrel hesitated. "Do you think I love you?" said Monte-Cristo, taking the young man's hand affectionately in his.

"Oh! you encourage me! and something tells me there," placing his hand on his heart, "that I ought to have no secret from you."—"You are right, Morrel; God is speaking to your heart, and your heart speaks to you. Tell me what it says."—"Count, will you allow me to send Baptistin to inquire after some one you know?"

"I am at your service, and still more my servants."

"Oh! I cannot live, if she is not better."

"Shall I ring for Baptistin?"—"No, I will go and speak to him myself." Morrel went out, called Baptistin, and whispered a few words to him. The valet ran directly. "Well, have you sent?" asked Monte-Cristo, seeing Morrel return.—"Yes, and now I shall be more calm."

"You know I am waiting," said Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"Yes, and I will tell you. One evening I was in a garden; a clump of trees concealed me; no one suspected I was there. Two persons passed near me—allow me to conceal their names for the present; they were speaking in an under-tone, and yet I was so interested in what they said, that I did not lose a single word."—"This is a gloomy introduction, if I may judge from your paleness and shuddering, Morrel."

"Oh! yes, very gloomy, my friend! Some one had just died in the house to which that garden belonged. One of those persons whose conversation I overheard was the master of the house, the other, the physician. The former was confiding to the latter his grief and fear; for it was the second time within a month that death had entered suddenly and unexpectedly that house, apparently destined to destruction by some exterminating angel, as an object of God's anger."—"Ah! ah!" said Monte-Cristo, looking earnestly at the young man, and, by an imperceptible movement, turning his chair, so that he remained in the shade while the light fell full on Maximilian's face. "Yes," continued Morrel, "death had entered that house twice within one month."—"And what did the doctor answer?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"He replied—he replied, that the death was not a natural one, and must be attributed——"

"To what?"—"To poison."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo, with a slight cough, which, in moments

of extreme emotion, helped him to disguise a blush, or his paleness, or the intense interest with which he listened ; "indeed, Maximilian, did you hear that ?"—"Yes, my dear count, I heard it ; and the doctor added, that if another death occurred in a similar way, he must appeal to justice." Monte-Cristo listened, or appeared to do so, with the greatest calmness. "Well !" said Maximilian, "death came a third time, and neither the master of the house nor the doctor said a word. Death is now, perhaps, striking a fourth blow. Count, what am I bound to do, being in possession of this secret ?"

"My dear friend," said Monte-Cristo, "you appear to be relating an adventure which we all know by heart. I know the house where you heard it, or one very similar to it ; a house with a garden, a master, a physician, and where there have been three unexpected and sudden deaths. Well ! I have not intercepted your confidence, and yet I know all that as well as you, and I have no conscientious scruples. No, it does not concern me. You say an exterminating angel appears to have devoted that house to God's anger—well ! who says your supposition is not reality ? Do not notice things which those whose interest it is to see them, pass over. I it is God's justice, instead of His anger, which is walking through that house, Maximilian, turn away your face, and let His justice accomplish its purpose." Morrel shuddered. There was something mournful, solemn, and terrible in the count's manner. "Besides," continued he, in so changed a tone that no one would have supposed it was the same person speaking—"besides, who says that it will begin again ?"—"It has returned, count !" exclaimed Morrel ; "that is why I hastened to you."

"Well ! what do you wish me to do ? Do you wish me, for instance, to give information to the procureur du roi ?" Monte-Cristo uttered the last words with so much meaning, that Morrel, starting up, cried out, "You know of whom I speak, count, do you not ?"—"Perfectly well, my good friend ; and I will prove it to you by putting the dots to the *z*, or, rather, by naming the persons. You were walking one evening in M. de Villefort's garden : from what you relate, I suppose it to have been the evening of Madame de Saint-Méran's death. You heard M. de Villefort talking to M. d'Avrigny about the death of M. de Saint-Méran, and that, no less surprising, of the countess. M. d'Avrigny said he believed they both proceeded from poison ; and you, honest man, have ever since been asking your heart, and sounding your conscience, to know if you ought to expose or conceal this secret. Why do you torment them ? 'Conscience, what hast thou to do with me ?' as Sterne said. My dear fellow, let them sleep on, if they are asleep ; let them grow pale in their drowsiness, if they are disposed to do so ; and pray do you remain in peace, who have no remorse to disturb you." Deep grief was depicted on Morrel's features ; he seized Monte-Cristo's hand. "But it is beginning again, I say !"

"Well !" said the count, astonished at his perseverance, which he could not understand, and looking still more earnestly at Maximilian, "let it begin again : it is a family of Atrides ; God has condemned them, and they must submit to their punishment. They will all disappear, like the fabrics children build with cards, and which fall, one by one, under the breath of their builder, even if there are two hundred of them. Three months since, it was M. de Saint-Méran ; Madame de Saint-Méran two months since ; the other day it was Barrois : to-day, the old Noirtier, or young Valentine."

"You knew it ?" cried Morrel, in such a paroxysm of terror that Monte-

Cristo started; he whom the falling heavens would have found unmoved; "you knew it, and said nothing?"—"And what is it to me?" replied Monte-Cristo, shrugging his shoulders: "do I know those people? and must I lose the one to save the other? Faith, no, for between the culprit and the victim I have no choice."

"But I," cried Morrel, groaning with sorrow,—"I love her!"

"You love?—whom?" cried Monte-Cristo, starting on his feet, and seizing the two hands which Morrel was raising towards heaven.

"I love most fondly—I love madly—I love as a man who would give his life-blood to spare her a tear—I love Valentine de Villefort, who is being murdered at this moment! Do you understand me? I love her; and I ask God and you how I can save her?" Monte-Cristo uttered a cry which those only can conceive who have heard the roar of a wounded lion. "Unhappy man!" cried he, wringing his hands in his turn; "you love Valentine!—that daughter of an accursed race!" Never had Morrel witnessed such an expression—never had so terrible an eye flashed before his face—never had the genius of terror he had so often seen, either on the battle-field or in the murderous nights of Algeria, shaken around him more dreadful fire. He drew back terrified.

As for Monte-Cristo, after this ebullition, he closed his eyes, as if dazzled by internal light. In a moment he restrained himself so powerfully that the tempestuous heaving of his breast subsided, as turbulent and foaming waves yield to the sun's genial influence when the cloud has passed. This silence, self-control, and struggle lasted about twenty seconds, then the count raised his pallid face. "See," said he, "my dear friend, how God punishes the most thoughtless and unfeeling men for their indifference, by presenting dreadful scenes to their view. I, who was looking on, an eager and curious spectator,—I, who was watching the working of this mournful tragedy,—I, who, like a wicked angel, was laughing at the evil men committed, protected by secrecy (a secret is easily kept by the rich and powerful, I am, in my turn, bitten by the serpent whose tortuous course I was watching, and bitten to the heart?" Morrel groaned. "Come, come," continued the count, "complaints are unavailing; be a man, be strong, be full of hope, for I am here, and will watch over you." Morrel shook his head sorrowfully. "I tell you to hope. Do you understand me?" cried Monte-Cristo. "Remember that I never uttered a falsehood and am never deceived. It is twelve o'clock, Maximilian: thank Heaven that you came at noon rather than in the evening, or to-morrow morning. Listen, Morrel!—it is noon; if Valentine is not now dead, she will not die."—"How so?" cried Morrel, "when I left her dying?" Monte-Cristo pressed his hands to his forehead. What was passing in that brain, so loaded with dreadful secrets? What does the angel of light, or the angel of darkness, say to that mind, at once implacable and generous? God only knows.

Monte-Cristo raised his head once more, and this time he was calm as a child awaking from its sleep. "Maximilian," said he, "return home. I command you not to stir—attempt nothing; not to let your countenance betray a thought, and I will send you tidings. Go!"

"Oh! count, you overwhelm me with that coolness. Have you, then, power against death?—Are you superhuman?—Are you an angel?" And the young man, who had never shrunk from danger, shrank before Monte-Cristo with indescribable terror. But Monte-Cristo looked at him with so much calmness and sweet a smile, that Maximilian felt the tears filling his eyes. "I can do much for you, my friend," replied the count. "Go; I

must be alone." Morrel, subdued by the extraordinary ascendancy Monte-Cristo exercised over everything around him, did not endeavour to resist it. He pressed the count's hand, and left. He stopped one moment at the door, for Baptistin, whom he saw in the Rue Matignon, and who was running.

Meanwhile, Villefort and D'Avrigny had made all possible haste, Valentine had not revived from her fainting fit on their arrival, and the doctor examined the invalid with all the care the circumstances demanded, and with an interest which the knowledge of the secret doubled. Villefort, closely watching his countenance and his lips, waited the result of the examination. Noirtier, paler than even the young girl, more eager than Villefort for the decision, was watching also intently and affectionately. At last D'Avrigny slowly uttered these words :—"She is still alive !"—"Still ?" cried Villefort ; "oh ! doctor, what a dreadful word is that."

"Yes," said the physician, "I repeat it ; she is still alive, and I am astonished at it."—"But is she safe ?" asked the father.

"Yes, since she lives." At that moment D'Avrigny's glance met Noirtier's eye. It glistened with such extraordinary joy, so rich and full of thought, that the physician was struck. He placed the young girl again on the chair ; her lips were scarcely discernible, they were so pale and white, as well as her whole face ; and remained motionless, looking at Noirtier, who appeared to anticipate and commend all he did. "Sir," said D'Avrigny to Villefort, "call Mademoiselle Valentine's maid, if you please." Villefort went himself to find her and D'Avrigny approached Noirtier. "Have you something to tell me ?" asked he. The old man winked his eyes expressively, which we may remember was his only way of expressing his approval.

"Privately ?"—"Yes."

"Well, I will remain with you." At this moment Villefort returned, followed by the lady's-maid ; and after her came Madame de Villefort.

"What is the matter, then, with this dear child ? she has just left me, and she complained of feeling unwell ; but I did not think seriously of it." The young woman, with tears in her eyes and every mark of affection of a true mother, approached Valentine and took her hand. D'Avrigny continued to look at Noirtier ; he saw the eyes of the old man dilate and become round, his cheeks turn pale and tremble ; the perspiration stood in drops upon his forehead. "Ah !" said he, involuntarily following Noirtier's eyes, which were fixed on Madame de Villefort, who repeated,— "This poor child would be better in bed. Come, Fanny, we will put her in." M. D'Avrigny, who saw that would be a means of his remaining alone with Noirtier, expressed his opinion that it was the best thing that could be done ; but he forbade anything being given to her besides what he ordered.

They carried Valentine away ; she had revived, but could scarcely move or speak, so shaken was her frame by the attack. She had, however, just power to give her grandfather one parting look ; who, in losing her, seemed to be resigning his very soul. D'Avrigny followed the invalid, wrote a prescription, ordered Villefort to take a cabriolet, go in person to a chemist's to get the prescribed medicine, bring it himself, and wait for him in his daughter's room. Then, having renewed his injunction not to give Valentine anything, he went down again to Noirtier, shut the doors carefully, and after convincing himself no one was listening,— "Do you," said he, "know anything of this young lady's illness ?"— "Yes," said the old man,

"We have no time to lose; I will question, and do you answer me." Noirtier made a sign that he was ready to answer. "Did you anticipate the accident which has happened to your granddaughter?"—"Yes." D'Avrigny reflected a moment; then approaching Noirtier,—*"Pardon what I am going to say,"* added he, *"but no indication should be neglected in this terrible situation. Did you see poor Barrois die?"* Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven. *"Do you know of what he died?"* asked D'Avrigny, placing his hand on Noirtier's shoulder.—*"Yes,"* replied the old man.—*"Do you think he died a natural death?"* A sort of smile was discernible on the motionless lips of Noirtier.

"Then you have thought Barrois was poisoned?"—"Yes."

"Do you think the poison he fell a victim to was intended for him?"

"No."—"Do you think the same hand which unintentionally struck Barrois has now attacked Valentine?"—"Yes."

"Then will she die, too?" asked D'Avrigny, fixing his penetrating gaze on Noirtier. He watched the effect of this question on the old man. *"No!"* replied he, with an air of triumph which would have puzzled the most clever diviner. *"Then you hope?"* said D'Avrigny, with surprise.—*"Yes."*

"What do you hope?" The old man made him understand with his eyes that he could not answer. *"Ah! yes, it is true!"* murmured D'Avrigny. Then, turning to Noirtier,—*"Do you hope the assassin will be tried?"* *"No."*—"Then you hope the poison will take no effect on Valentine?"—"Yes."

"It is no news to you," added D'Avrigny, *"to tell you an attempt has been made to poison her?"* The old man made a sign that he entertained no doubt upon the subject. *"Then how do you hope Valentine will escape?"* Noirtier kept his eyes steadily fixed on the same spot. D'Avrigny followed the direction, and saw they were fixed on a bottle containing the mixture which he took every morning. *"Ah! ah!"* said D'Avrigny, struck with a sudden thought, *"has it occurred to you—"* Noirtier did not let him finish. *"Yes,"* said he. *"To prepare her system to resist poison?"*—"Yes."

"By accustoming her by degrees——"

"Yes, yes, yes," said Noirtier, delighted to be understood.

"Truly! I had told you there was brucine in the mixture I give you!"

"Yes."—"And by accustoming her to that poison, you have endeavoured to neutralize the effect of a similar poison?" Noirtier's joy continued. *"And you have succeeded!"* exclaimed D'Avrigny. *"Without that precaution Valentine would have died before assistance could have been procured. The dose has been excessive, but she has only been shaken by it; and this time, at any rate, Valentine will not die."* A superhuman joy expanded the old man's eyes, which were raised towards heaven with an expression of infinite gratitude. At this moment Villefort returned. *"Here, doctor,"* said he, *"is what you sent me for."*

"Was this prepared in your presence?"

"Yes," replied the procureur du roi.

"Have you not let it go out of your hands?"—"No." D'Avrigny took the bottle, poured some drops of the mixture it contained in the hollow of his hand, and swallowed them. *"Well,"* said he, *"let us go to Valentine. I will give instructions to every one, and you, M. de Villefort, will yourself see that no one deviates from them."*

At the moment when D'Avrigny was returning to Valentine's room, accompanied by Villefort, an Italian priest, of serious demeanour and calm

and firm tone, hired for his use the house adjoining the hotel of M. de Villefort. No one knew how the three former tenants of that house left it. About two hours afterwards its foundation was reported to be unsafe; but the report did not prevent the new occupant establishing himself there with his modest furniture the same day at five o'clock. The lease was drawn up for three, six, or nine years by the new tenant, who, according to the rule of the proprietor, paid six months in advance. This new tenant, who, as we have said, was an Italian, was called Il Signor Giacomo Busoni. Workmen were immediately called in, and the same night the passengers at the end of the faubourg saw with surprise carpenters and masons occupied in repairing the lower part of the tottering house.

CHAPTER XCV.

THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

WE have seen in a preceding chapter Madame Danglars coming formally to announce to Madame de Villefort the approaching marriage of Eugénie Danglars and M. Andrea Cavalcanti. This announcement, which implied, or appeared to imply, a resolution taken by all the parties concerned in this great affair, had been preceded by a scene to which our readers must be admitted. We beg them to take one step backwards, and to transport themselves, the morning of that day of great catastrophes, into the beautifully gilded saloon we have before shown them, and which was the pride of its owner, the Baron Danglars. In this room, at about ten o'clock in the morning, the banker himself had been walking some minutes, thoughtful, and evidently uneasy, watching each door, and listening to every sound. When his patience was exhausted, he called his valet. "Stephen," said he, "see why Mademoiselle Eugénie has asked me to meet her in the drawing-room, and why she makes me wait so long."

Having given this vent to his ill-humour, the baron became more calm; Mademoiselle Danglars had that morning requested an interview with her father, and had fixed on that drawing-room as the spot. The singularity of this step, and, above all, its formal character, had not a little surprised the banker, who had immediately obeyed his daughter by repairing first to the drawing-room. Stephen soon returned from his errand. "Mademoiselle's lady's maid says, sir, that mademoiselle is finishing her toilette, and will be here shortly."

Danglars nodded, to signify he was satisfied. To the world and to his servants Danglars assumed the good-natured man and the weak father. This was one of his characters in the popular comedy he was performing; it was a physiognomy he had adopted, and which appeared as suitable to him as it was to the right side of the profile masks of the fathers of the ancient theatres to have a turned-up and laughing lip, while, on the left side, it was drawn down and ill-tempered. Let us hasten to say that, in private, the turned-up and laughing lip descended to the level of the drawn-down and ill-tempered one; so that, generally, the indulgent man disappeared to give place to the brutal husband and domineering father. "Why the devil does that foolish girl, who pretends to wish to speak to me, not come into my cabinet? and why, above all, can she want to speak to me at all?"

He was revolving this worrying thought in his brain for the twentieth time, when the door opened, and Eugénie appeared, attired in a figured black satin dress, her hair arranged, and gloves on, as if going to the Italian

Opera. "Well, Eugénie, what is it you want with me? and why in this solemn drawing-room when the cabinet is so comfortable?"

"You are right, sir, and have proposed two questions which include all the conversation we are going to have. I will answer them both, and, contrary to the usual method, the last first, as being the least complex. I have chosen the drawing-room, sir, as our place of rendezvous, in order to avoid the disagreeable impressions and influences of a banker's cabinet. Those cash-books, gilded as they may be, those drawers, locked like gates of fortresses, those heaps of bank-bills, come from I know not where, and the quantities of letters from England, Holland, Spain, India, China, and Peru, have generally a strange influence on a father's mind, and make him forget there is in the world an interest greater and more sacred than the good opinion of his correspondents. I have, therefore, chosen this drawing-room, where you see, smiling and happy in their magnificent frames, your portrait, mine, my mother's, and all sorts of rural landscapes and touching pastorals. I rely much on external impressions; perhaps, with regard to you, they are immaterial; but I should be no artist if I had not some fancies."

"Very well," replied M. Danglars, who had listened to all this preamble with imperturbable coolness, but without understanding a word, engaged as he was, like every man burdened with thoughts of the past, in seeking the thread of his own ideas in those of the speaker.

"There is, then, the second point cleared up, or nearly so," said Eugénie, without the least confusion, and with that masculine pointedness which distinguished her gesture and her language; "and you appear satisfied with the explanation. Now, let us return to the first! You ask me why I have requested this interview; I will tell you in two words, sir; I will not marry M. le Comte Andrea Cavalcanti."

Danglars bounded from his chair, and with this motion raised his eyes and arms towards heaven.

"Yes, indeed, sir," continued Eugénie, still quite calm; "you are astonished, I see; for since this little affair commenced, I have not manifested the slightest opposition; sure, as I always am, when the opportunity arrives, to oppose to people who have not consulted me, and things which displease me, a determined and absolute will. However, this time, this tranquillity, this passiveness, as philosophers say, proceeded from another source; it proceeded from a wish, like a submissive and devoted daughter (a slight smile was observable on the purple lips of the young girl), to practise obedience."—"Well?" asked Danglars.

"Well, sir," replied Eugénie, "I have tried to the very last; and now the moment has come, in spite of all my efforts, I feel it is impossible."—"But," said Danglars, whose weak mind was at first quite overwhelmed with the weight of this pitiless logic, marking evident premeditation and force of will, "what is your reason for this refusal, Eugénie? what reason do you assign?"

"My reason?" replied the young girl. "Well! it is not that the man is more ugly, more foolish, or more disagreeable than any other; no, M. Andrea Cavalcanti may appear to those who look at men's faces and figures a very good model. It is not, either, that my heart is less touched by him than any other; that would be a school-girl's reason, which I consider quite beneath me. I actually love no one, sir; you know it, do you not? I do not, then, see why, without real necessity, I should encumber my life with a perpetual companion. Has not some sage said, '*Rien de trop*;' and another, '*Portez tout avec vous-même*?' I have been taught

these two aphorisms in Latin and in Greek ; one is, I believe, from Phædrus, and the other from Bias. Well, my dear father, in the shipwreck of life—for life is an eternal shipwreck of our hopes—I cast into the sea my useless encumbrance, that is all ; and I remain with my own will, disposed to live perfectly alone, and, consequently, perfectly free.”——

“Unhappy girl ! unhappy girl !” murmured Danglars, turning pale, for he knew, from long experience, the solidity of the obstacle he so suddenly encountered.

“Unhappy girl !” replied Eugénie, “unhappy girl ! do you say, sir ? No, indeed, the exclamation appears quite theatrical and affected. Happy, on the contrary ; for what am I in want of ? The world calls me beautiful. It is something to be well received : I like a favourable reception ; it expands the countenance, and those around me do not then appear so ugly. I possess a share of wit, and a certain relative sensibility, which enables me to draw from general life, for the support of mine, all I meet with that is good, like the monkey who cracks the nut to get at its contents. I am rich, for you have one of the first fortunes in France : I am your only daughter, and you are not so tenacious as the fathers of La Porte Saint-Martin and La Gaieté, who disinherited their daughters because they will give them no grandchildren. Besides, the provident law has deprived you of the power to disinherit me, at least, entirely, as it has also of the power to compel me to marry a particular person. Thus, beautiful, witty, somewhat talented, as the comic operas say, and rich—and that is happiness, sir—why do you call me unhappy ?”

Danglars, seeing his daughter smiling, and proud even to insolence, could not entirely repress his brutal feelings ; but they betrayed themselves only by an exclamation. Under the inquiring gaze of his daughter, before that beautiful black eyebrow, contracted by interrogation, he prudently turned away, and calmed himself immediately, daunted by the iron hand of circumspection. “Truly, my daughter,” replied he, with a smile, “you are all you boast of being, excepting one thing ; I will not too hastily tell you which, but would rather leave you to guess it.” Eugénie looked at Danglars, much surprised that one flower of her crown of pride, with which she had so superbly decked herself, should be disputed. “My daughter,” continued the banker, “you have perfectly explained to me the sentiments which influence a girl like you who is determined she will not marry ; now it remains for me to tell you the motives of a father like me, who has decided his daughter shall marry.” Eugénie bowed, not as a submissive daughter, but as an adversary prepared for a discussion.

“My daughter,” continued Danglars, “when a father asks his daughter to choose a husband, he has always some reason for wishing her to marry. Some are affected with the mania to which you alluded just now, that of living again in their grandchildren. This is not my weakness, I tell you at once ; family joys have no charm for me. I may acknowledge this to a daughter whom I know to be philosophical enough to understand my indifference, and not to impute it to me as a crime.”

“*A la bonne heure*,” said Eugénie ; “let us speak candidly, sir, I admire it.”——“Oh !” said Danglars ; “I can, when circumstances render it desirable, adopt your system, although it may not be my general practice. I will therefore proceed. I have proposed to you to marry, not for your sake, for, indeed, I did not think of you in the least at the moment (you admire candour, and will now be satisfied, I hope) ; but because it suited me to marry you as soon as possible, on account of certain commercial speculations I am desirous of entering into.” Eugénie became uneasy.

"It is just so, I assure you, and you must not be angry with me; for you have sought this disclosure. I do not willingly enter into all these arithmetical explanations with an artist like you, who fear to enter my cabinet lest you should imbibe disagreeable or anti-poetic impressions and sensations. But in that same banker's cabinet, where you very willingly presented yourself yesterday to ask for the thousand francs I give you monthly for pocket-money, you must know, my dear young lady, many things may be learned, useful even to a girl who will not marry. There one may learn, for instance, what, out of regard to your nervous susceptibility, I will inform you of in the drawing-room, namely, that the credit of a banker is his physical and moral life; that credit sustains him as breath animates the body; and M. de Monte-Cristo once gave me a lecture on that subject, which I have never forgotten. There we may learn that as credit sinks, the body becomes a corpse; and this is what must happen very soon to the banker who is proud to own so good a logician as you for his daughter." But, Eugénie, instead of stooping, drew herself up under the blow. "Ruined!" said she.

"Exactly, my daughter; that is precisely what I mean," said Danglars, almost digging his nails into his breast, while he preserved on his harsh features the smile of the heartless though clever man; "ruined! yes, that is it."—"Ah!" said Eugénie.

"Yes, ruined! now it is revealed, this secret so full of horror, as the tragic poet says. Now, my daughter, learn from my lips how you may alleviate this misfortune, so far as it will affect you."

"Oh!" cried Eugénie, "you are a bad physiognomist, if you imagine I deplore, on my own account, the catastrophe you announce to me. I ruined! and what will that signify to me? Have I not my talent left? Can I not, like *la Pasta*, *la Malibran*, *la Grisi*, acquire for myself what you would never have given me, whatever might have been your fortune, a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand livres per annum, for which I shall be indebted to no one but myself; and which, instead of being given as you gave me those poor twelve thousand francs, with pouting looks and reproaches for my prodigality, will be accompanied with acclamations, with bravos, and with flowers! And if I do not possess that talent, which your smiles prove to me you doubt, should I not still have that furious love of independence, which will be a substitute for all treasure, and which in my mind supercedes even the instinct of self-preservation? No, I grieve not on my own account, I shall always find a resource; my books, my pencils, my piano, all those things which cost but little, and which I shall be able to procure, will remain my own. Do you think that I sorrow for Madame Danglars? Undeceive yourself again; either I am greatly mistaken, or she has provided against the catastrophe which threatens you, and which will pass over without affecting her; she has taken care for herself, at least I hope so, for her attention has not been diverted from her projects by watching over me; she has fostered my independence by professedly indulging my love for liberty. Oh! no, sir; from my childhood I have seen too much, and understood too much, of what has passed around me, for misfortune to have an undue power over me; from my earliest recollections, I have been beloved by no one—so much the worse; that has naturally led me to love no one—so much the better: now you have my profession of faith."

"Then," said Danglars, pale with anger, which did not emanate from offended paternal love,—“then, mademoiselle, you persist in your deter-

mination to accelerate my ruin?"—"Your ruin? I accelerate your ruin! what do you mean? I do not understand you."

"So much the better, I have a ray of hope left: listen."—"I am all attention," said Eugénie, looking so earnestly at her father, that it was an effort to the latter to bear her powerful gaze.

"M. Cavalcanti," continued Danglars, "is about to marry you, and will place in my hands his fortune, amounting to three million livres."

"That is admirable!" said Eugénie, with sovereign contempt, smoothing her gloves out one upon the other.

"You think I shall deprive you of those three millions," said Danglars; "but do not fear it. They are destined to produce at least ten. I and a brother banker have obtained a grant of a railway, the only speculation which in the present day offers any prospect of immediate success, like the chimerical Mississippi, which Law formerly supplied for the good Parisians, those Cockneys in speculation. In my estimation, a million's worth in the railway is equal to an acre of uncultivated land upon the banks of the Ohio. It is a deposit, belonging to a mortgage, which is an advance, as you see, since we gain at least ten, fifteen, twenty, or a hundred livres' worth of iron in exchange for our money. Well, within a week I am to deposit four millions for my share; these four millions, I promise you, will produce ten or twelve."

"But during my visit to you the day before yesterday, sir, which you appear to recollect so well," replied Eugénie, "I saw you lay up—is not that the term?—five millions and a half; you even pointed them out to me in two drafts on the treasury, and you were astonished that so valuable a paper did not dazzle my eyes like lightning."

"Yes, but those five millions and a half are not mine, and are only a proof of the great confidence placed in me; my title of popular banker has gained me the confidence of the hospitals, and the five millions and a half belong to the hospitals; at any other time I should not have hesitated to make use of them, but the great losses I have recently sustained are well known, and, as I told you, my credit is rather shaken. That deposit may be at any moment withdrawn, and if I had employed it for another purpose, I should bring on me a disgraceful bankruptcy. I do not despise bankruptcies, believe me, those which enrich, but not those which ruin. Now, if you marry M. Cavalcanti, and I touch the three millions, or even if it is thought I am going to touch them, my credit will be restored, and my fortune, which for the last month or two has been swallowed up in gulfs which have been opened in my path by an inconceivable fatality, will revive. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly; you pledge me for three millions, do you not?"

"The greater the amount, the more flattering it is to you; it gives you an idea of your value."—"Thank you. One word more, sir; do you promise me to make what use you can of the report of the fortune M. Cavalcanti will bring, without touching the sum? This is no act of selfishness, but of delicacy. I am willing to help rebuild your fortune; but I will not be an accomplice in the ruin of others."—"But since I tell you," cried Danglars, "that with these three millions——"

"Do you expect to recover your position, sir, without touching those three millions?"

"I hope so, if the marriage should take place and confirm my credit."

"Shall you be able to pay M. Cavalcanti the five hundred thousand rancs you promise for my dowry?"

"He shall receive them on returning from the town-hall."

"Well!"—"What next? what more do you want?"

"I wish to know if, in demanding my signature, you leave me entirely free in my person?"—"Absolutely!"

"Then, well, as I said before, sir, I am ready to marry M. Cavalcanti."

"But what are your projects?"—"Ah, that is my secret. What advantage should I have over you, if, knowing your secret, I were to tell you mine?" Danglars bit his lips. "Then," said he, "you are ready to pay the official visits, which are absolutely indispensable?"

"Yes," replied Eugénie.

"And to sign the contract in three days?"—"Yes."

"Then, in my turn, I will say, well!" Danglars pressed his daughter's hand in his. But it was extraordinary, neither did the father say, "Thank you, my child," nor did the daughter smile at her father. "Is the conference ended?" asked Eugénie, rising. Danglars motioned that he had nothing more to say. Five minutes afterwards the piano resounded to the touch of Mademoiselle d'Armilly's fingers, and Mademoiselle Danglars was singing Brabantio's malediction on Desdemona. At the end of the piece Stephen entered, and announced to Eugénie that the horses were in the carriage, and the baroness was waiting for her to pay her visits. We have seen them at Villefort's; they proceeded then on their course.

CHAPTER XCVI.

THE CONTRACT.

THREE days after the scene we have just described, namely towards five o'clock in the afternoon of the day fixed for the signature of the contract between Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars and Andrea Cavalcanti, whom the banker persisted in calling prince, as a fresh breeze agitated all the leaves in the little garden situated in front of the count of Monte-Cristo's house, and the latter was preparing to go out while his horses were impatiently pawing the ground, held in by the coachman, who had been seated a quarter of an hour on his box, the elegant phaeton with which we are familiar, rapidly turned the angle of the entrance-gate, and threw, rather than set down, on the steps of the door, M. Andrea Cavalcanti, as much decked and as gay as if he, on his side, was going to marry a princess. He inquired after the count with his usual familiarity, and, bounding lightly to the first story, met him on the top of the stairs. The count stopped on seeing the young man. As for Andrea, he was launched, and when once launched nothing stopped him. "Ah! good morning, my dear count," said he. "Ah, M. Andrea!" said the latter, with his half-jesting tone; "how do you do."

"Charmingly, as you see. I am come to talk to you about a thousand things; but, first tell me, were you going out or just returned?"

"I was going out, sir."—"Then, in order not to hinder you, I will get up with you, if you please, in your carriage, and Tom shall follow with my phaeton in tow."

"No," said the count, with an imperceptible smile of contempt, for he had no wish to be seen in the young man's society,—"*no*; I prefer listening to you here, my dear M. Andrea; we can chat better indoors, and there *is no* coachman to overhear our conversation." The count returned to a small drawing-room on the first floor, sat down, and, crossing his legs, motioned to the young man to take a seat also. Andrea assumed his gayest manner. "You know, my dear count," said he, "the ceremony is

to take place this evening. At nine o'clock the contract is to be signed at my father-in-law's."—"Ah! indeed?" said Monte-Cristo. "What; is it news to you? Has not M. Danglars apprised you of the solemnity?"—"Oh, yes," said the count; "I received a letter from him yesterday, but I do not think the hour was mentioned."

"Possibly; my father-in-law trusted to its general notoriety."

"Well," said Monte-Cristo, "you are fortunate, M. Cavalcanti! it is a most suitable alliance you are contracting, and Mademoiselle Danglars is a pretty girl."—"Yes, indeed she is," replied Cavalcanti, with a very modest tone.

"Above all, she is very rich,—at least, I believe so," said Monte-Cristo.

"Very rich, do you think?" replied the young man.

"Doubtless; it is said M. Danglars conceals at least half of his fortune."

"And he acknowledges fifteen or twenty millions," said Andrea, with a look sparkling with joy.

"Without reckoning," added Monte-Cristo, "that he is on the eve of entering into a sort of speculation already in vogue in the United States and in England, but quite novel in France."

"Yes, yes, I know what you allude to,—the railway, of which he has obtained the grant, is it not?"—"Precisely! it is generally believed he will gain ten millions by that affair."—"Ten millions! Do you think so? It is magnificent!" said Cavalcanti, who was quite confounded at the metallic sound of these golden words. "Without reckoning," replied Monte-Cristo, "that all his fortune will come to you, and justly too, since Mademoiselle Danglars is an only daughter. Besides, your own fortune, as your father assured me, is almost equal to that of your betrothed. But, enough of money matters. Do you know, M. Andrea, I think you have managed this affair rather skilfully?"

"Not badly, by any means," said the young man; "I was born for a diplomatist."—"Well, you must become a diplomatist; it is a knowledge not to be acquired, you know; it is instinctive. Have you lost your heart?"—"Indeed, I fear it," replied Andrea, in the tone in which he had heard Dorante or Valère reply to Alceste in the *Théâtre Français*. "Is your love returned?"

"I suppose so," said Andrea, with a triumphant smile, "since I am accepted. But I must not forget one grand point."—"Which?"

"That I have been singularly assisted."—"Nonsense!"

"I have, indeed."—"By circumstances?"—"No; by you."

"By me? Not at all, prince," said Monte-Cristo, laying a marked stress on the title; "what have I done for you? Are not your name, your social position, and your merit sufficient?"—"No," said Andrea,—"no; it is useless for you to say so, count. I maintain that the position of a man like you has done more than my name, my social position, and my merit."

"You are completely mistaken, sir," said Monte-Cristo, coldly, who felt the perfidious manœuvre of the young man, and understood the bearing of his words; "you only acquired my protection after the influence and fortune of your father had been ascertained; for, after all, who procured for me, who had never seen either you or your illustrious father, the pleasure of your acquaintance?—Two of my good friends, Lord Wilmore and the Abbé Busoni. What encouraged me not to become your surety, but to patronize you?—It was your father's name, so well known in Italy and so highly honoured. Personally, I do not know you." This calm tone and perfect ease made Andrea feel he was, for the moment, restrained

by a more muscular hand than his own, and that the restraint could not be easily broken through.

"Oh ! then my father has really a very large fortune, count ?"

"It appears so, sir," replied Monte-Cristo.

"Do you know if my promised dowry is come ?"

"I have been advised of it."—"But the three millions ?"

"The three millions are probably on the road."

"Then I shall really have them ?"—"Forsooth !" said the count, "I do not think you have yet known the want of money." Andrea was so surprised, he reflected for a moment. Then, arousing from his reverie,—
 "Now, sir, I have one request to make to you, which you will understand, even if it should be disagreeable to you."—"Proceed," said Monte-Cristo.—
 "I have formed an acquaintance, thanks to my good fortune, with many noted persons, and have, at least for the moment, a crowd of friends. But marrying, as I am about to do, before all Paris, I ought to be supported by an illustrious name, and, in the absence of the paternal hand, some powerful one ought to lead me to the altar : now, my father is not coming to Paris, is he ? He is old, covered with wounds, and suffers dreadfully, he says, in travelling."—"Indeed !"

"Well, I am come to ask a favour of you."—"Of me !"

"Yes, of you."—"And pray what may it be ?"

"Well, to take his part."—"Ah ! my dear sir ! What ! after the numerous relations I have had the happiness to sustain towards you, you know me so little as to ask such a thing ! Ask me to lend you half a million, and, although such a loan is somewhat rare, on my honour you would annoy me less ! Know, then, what I thought I had already told you, that, in the moral participation particularly with this world's affairs, the Count of Monte-Cristo has never ceased to entertain the scruples and even the superstitions of the East. I, who have a seraglio at Cairo, one at Smyrna, and one at Constantinople, preside at a wedding ?—never !"—
 "Then, you refuse me ?"—"Decidedly ; and were you my son or my brother I would refuse you in the same way."

"But what must be done ?" said Andrea, disappointed.

"You said just now, you had a hundred friends."

"Agreed ; but you introduced me at M. Danglars'."

"Not at all ! let us recall the exact facts. You met him at a dinner party at my house, and you introduced yourself at his house ; that is a totally different affair."

"Yes, but by my marriage, you have forwarded that."—"I ! not in the least, I beg you to believe. Recollect what I told you when you asked me to propose you. 'Oh ! I never make matches, my dear prince, it is my settled principle.' " Andrea bit his lips.

"But, at least you will be there ?"

"Will all Paris be there ?"—"Oh, certainly."

"Well, like all Paris, I shall be there too," said the count.

"And will you sign the contract ?"

"I see no objection to that ; my scruples do not go thus far."

"Well, since you will grant me no more, I must be content with what you give me. But one word more, count."—"What is it ?"

"Advice."—"Be careful ; advice is worse than a service."

"Oh, you can give me this without compromising yourself."

"Tell me what it is."

"Is my wife's fortune five hundred thousand livres ?"

"That is the sum M. Danglars himself announced."

"Must I receive it, or leave it in the hands of the notary?"

"This is the way such affairs are generally arranged when it is wished to do them stylishly:—Your two solicitors appoint a meeting, when the contract is signed, for the next day or the following; then they exchange the two portions, for which they each give a receipt; then, when the marriage is celebrated, they place the amount at your disposal as chief of the community."—"Because," said Andrea, with a certain ill-concealed uneasiness, "I thought I heard my father-in-law say he intended embarking our property in that famous railway affair of which you spoke just now."—"Well," replied Monte-Cristo, "it will be the way, everybody says, of trebling your fortune in twelve months. The Baron Danglars is a good father, and knows how to calculate."

"Come, then," said Andrea, "all is well, excepting your refusal, which quite grieves me."—"You must attribute it only to natural scruples under similar circumstances."

"Well," said Andrea, "let it be as you wish: this evening, then, at nine o'clock."—"Adieu till then." Notwithstanding a slight resistance on the part of Monte-Cristo, whose lips turned pale, but who preserved his ceremonious smile, Andrea seized the count's hand, pressed it, jumped into his phaeton, and disappeared.

The four or five remaining hours before nine o'clock arrived, Andrea employed in riding, paying visits destined to interest those of whom he had spoken, to appear at the banker's in their gayest equipages, dazzling them by promises of grand feasts, which have since turned every brain, and in which Danglars was just becoming initiated. In fact, at half-past eight in the evening the grand saloon, the gallery adjoining, and the three other drawing-rooms on the same floor, were filled with a perfumed crowd, who sympathized but little in the event, but who all participated in that love of being present wherever there is anything fresh to be seen. An Academician would say that *soirées* of the world are collections of flowers which attract inconstant butterflies, famished bees, and buzzing drones.

No one could dispute that the rooms were splendidly illuminated, the light streamed forth on the gold mouldings and the silk hangings; and all the bad taste of this furniture, which had only its richness to boast of, shone in its splendour. Mademoiselle Eugénie was dressed with elegant simplicity; a figured white silk dress, a white rose half-concealed in her jet-black hair, were her only ornaments, unaccompanied by a single jewel. Her eyes, however, betrayed that perfect confidence which contradicted the girlish simplicity of this modest attire. Madame Danglars was chatting at a short distance with Debray, Beauchamp, and Château-Renaud. Debray was admitted to the house for this grand solemnity, but like every one else, and without any particular privilege. M. Danglars, surrounded by deputies and men connected with the revenue, was explaining a new theory of taxation which he intended to adopt when the course of events had compelled government to call him into the ministry. Andrea, on whose arm hung one of the most consummate dandies of the opera, was explaining to him rather cleverly, since he was obliged to be bold to appear at ease, his future projects, and the new luxuries he meant to introduce to Parisian fashions with his hundred and seventy-five thousand livres per annum. The crowd moved to and fro in those rooms like an ebb and flow of turquoises, rubies, emeralds, opals, and diamonds. As usual, the oldest women were the most decorated, and the ugliest the most conspicuous. If there was a beautiful lily, or a sweet

rose, you had to search for it, concealed in some corner behind a mother with a turban, or an aunt with a bird-of-paradise.

At each moment, in the midst of the crowd, the buzzing, and the laughter, the door-keeper's voice was heard announcing some name well known in the financial department, respected in the army, or illustrious in the literary world, and which was acknowledged by a slight movement in the different groups. But for one whose privilege it was to agitate that ocean of human waves, how many were received with a look of indifference or a sneer of disdain ! At the moment when the hand of the massive time-piece, representing Endymion asleep, pointed to nine on its golden face, and the hammer, the faithful type of mechanical thought, struck nine times, the name of Count de Monte-Cristo resounded in its turn, and, as if by an electric shock, all the assembly turned towards the door. The count was dressed in black, and with his habitual simplicity ; his white waistcoat displayed his expansive noble chest, his black stock appeared singularly remarkable, contrasting as it did with the deadly paleness of his face. His only jewel was a chain, so fine that the slender gold thread was scarcely perceptible on his white waistcoat. A circle was formed immediately round the door. The count perceived at one glance Madame Danglars at one end of the drawing-room, M. Danglars at the other, and Eugénie in front of him. He first advanced towards the baroness, who was chatting with Madame de Villefort, who had come alone. Valentine being still an invalid ; and without turning aside, so clear was the road left for him, he passed from the baroness to Eugénie, whom he complimented in such rapid and measured terms, that the proud artist was quite struck. Near her was Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly, who thanked the count for the letters of introduction he had so kindly given her for Italy, which she intended immediately to visit.

in the opinion of the young men, and for the moment seemed to outvie the sun in splendour. As for the ladies, it is needless to say that, while jealous of these millions, they thought they did not require them to render them beautiful. Andrea, surrounded by his friends, complimented, flattered, beginning to believe in the reality of his dream, was almost bewildered. The notary solemnly took the pen, flourished it above his head, and said, "Gentlemen, the contract is to sign."

The baron was to sign first; then the representative of M. Cavalcanti, senior; then the baroness; afterwards the future couple, as they are styled on the ceremonious stamped papers. The baron took the pen and signed, then the representative. The baroness approached, leaning on Madame de Villefort's arm. "My dear," said she, as she took the pen, "is it not vexatious? An unexpected incident, in the affair of murder and theft at the count of Monte-Cristo's, in which he nearly fell a victim, deprives us of the pleasure of seeing M. de Villefort."

"Indeed," said M. Danglars, in the same tone in which he would have said, "Faith, I care very little about it!"

"Indeed," said Monte-Cristo, approaching, "I am much afraid I am the involuntary cause of that absence."—"What! you, count," said Madame Danglars, signing; "if you are, take care, I shall never forgive you." Andrea pricked up his ears.—"But it is not my fault; as I shall endeavour to prove." Every one listened eagerly: Monte-Cristo, who so rarely opened his lips, was about to speak. "You remember," said the count, during the most profound silence, "that the unhappy wretch who came to rob me, died at my house; it was supposed he was stabbed by his accomplice, on attempting to leave it."

"Yes," said Danglars.—"In order to examine his wounds, he was undressed, and his clothes were thrown into a corner, where officers of justice picked them up, with the exception of the waistcoat, which they overlooked." Andrea turned pale, and drew towards the door, he saw a cloud rising in the horizon, which appeared to forebode a coming storm.

"Well! this waistcoat was discovered to-day, covered with blood, and with a hole over the heart." The ladies screamed, and two or three prepared to faint. "It was brought to me. No one could guess what the dirty rag could be; I alone supposed it was the waistcoat of the victim. My valet, in examining this mournful relic, felt a paper in the pocket and drew it out; it was a letter addressed to you, baron."

"To me!" cried Danglars.—"Yes, indeed, to you; I succeeded in deciphering your name under the blood with which the letter was stained," replied Monte-Cristo, amid the general burst of amazement.

"But," asked Madame Danglars, looking at her husband with uneasiness, "how could that prevent M. de Villefort—"

"In this simple way, madame," replied Monte-Cristo; "the waistcoat and the letter were both, what is termed, convictive evidence: I therefore sent it all to M. le Procureur du Roi. You understand, my dear baron, legal proceedings are the safest in criminal cases; it was, perhaps, some plot against you." Andrea looked steadily at Monte-Cristo, and disappeared in the second drawing-room.

"Possibly," said Danglars; "was not this murdered man an old galley-slave?"—"Yes," replied the count; "a felon named Caderousse." Danglars turned slightly pale, Andrea reached the anteroom beyond the little drawing-room.

"But go on signing," said Monte-Cristo; "I perceive my story has caused a general emotion, and I beg to apologise to you, baroness, and to

Mademoiselle Danglars." The baroness, who had signed, returned the pen to the notary. "Prince Cavalcanti!" said the latter; "Prince Cavalcanti, where are you?"—"Andrea! Andrea!" repeated several young people, who were already on sufficiently intimate terms with him to call him by his Christian name.—"Call the prince! inform him it is his turn to sign!" cried Danglars to one of the doorkeepers.

But at the same instant the crowd of guests rushed, terrified, into the principal saloon, as if some frightful monster had entered the apartments, *guarrens quem devoret*. There was, indeed, reason to retreat, to be alarmed, and to scream. An officer was placing two soldiers at the door of each drawing-room, and was advancing towards Danglars, preceded by a commissioner of police, girded with his scarf. Madame Danglars uttered a scream and fainted. Danglars, who thought himself threatened (certain consciences are never calm),—Danglars appeared before his guests with a terrified countenance.

"What is the matter, sir?" asked Monte-Cristo, advancing to meet the commissioner.—"Which of you gentlemen," asked the magistrate, without replying to the count, "answers to the name of Andrea Cavalcanti?" A cry of stupor was heard from all parts of the room. They searched; they questioned. "But who then is Andrea Cavalcanti?" asked Danglars, in amazement.—"A galley-slave, escaped from confinement at Toulon."—"And what crime has he committed?"—"He is accused," said the commissary, with his inflexible voice, "of having assassinated the man named Caderousse, his former companion in prison, at the moment he was making his escape from the house of the Count of Monte-Cristo." Monte-Cristo cast a rapid glance around him. Andrea was gone.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE DEPARTURE FOR BELGIUM.

A FEW minutes after the scene of confusion produced in the saloons of M. Danglars by the unexpected appearance of the brigade of soldiers, and by the disclosure which had followed, the large hotel was deserted with a rapidity which the announcement of a case of plague or of cholera morbus among the guests would have caused. In a few minutes, through all the doors, down all the staircases, by every issue, each one had hastened to retire, or rather to fly; for it was one of those circumstances in which it is useless to attempt to impart that common consolation which makes even the best friends importunate under great catastrophes. There remained in the banker's hotel only Danglars, closeted in his cabinet, and making his statement to the officer of the detachment; Madame Danglars, terrified, in the boudoir with which we are acquainted; and Eugénie, who, with haughty air and disdainful lip, had retired to her room with her inseparable companion, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly. As for the numerous servants (more numerous that evening than usual, for their number was augmented by the cooks and butlers of the Café de Paris), venting on their employers their anger at what they termed the insult, they collected in groups in the hall, in the kitchens, or in their rooms, thinking very little of their duty, which was thus naturally interrupted. Of all this household, only two individuals deserve our notice; these are Mademoiselle Eugénie Danglars and Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly.

The betrothed had retired, as we said, with haughty air, disdainful lip,

and the demeanour of an outraged queen, followed by her companion, paler and more affected than herself. On reaching her room Eugénie locked her door, while Louise fell on a chair. "Ah, what a dreadful thing!" said the young musician; "who would have suspected it? M. Andrea Cavalcanti a murderer—a galley-slave escaped—a convict!" An ironical smile curled the lip of Eugénie. "In truth, I was fated," said she; "I escaped the Morcerf only to fall into the Cavalcanti."—"Oh, do not confound the two, Eugénie."

"Hold your tongue! The men are all infamous; and I am happy to be able now to do more than detest them, I despise them."

"What shall we do?" asked Louise.

"What shall we do?"—"Yes."

"Why, the same we had intended doing three days since—set off."

"What! although you are not now going to be married, you intend still——"

"Listen, Louise! I hate this life of the fashionable world, always ordered, measured, ruled, like our music-paper. What I have always wished for, desired, and coveted, is the life of an artist, free and independent, relying only on my own resources, and accountable only to myself. Remain here! what for?—that they may try, a month hence, to marry me again; and to whom?—to M. Debray, perhaps, as it was once proposed. No, Louise, no! This evening's adventure will serve for my excuse. I did not seek one, I did not ask for one. God sends me this, and I hail it joyfully!"

"How strong and courageous you are!" said the fair frail girl to her brunette companion. "Did you not yet know me? Come, Louise, let us talk of our affairs. The post-chaise——"

"Was happily bought three days since."

"Have you had it sent where we are to go for it?"—"Yes."

"Our passport?"—"Here it is!"

And Eugénie, with her usual precision, opened a printed paper, and read,—

"M. Léon d'Armilly, twenty years of age; profession, artist; hair black, eyes black; travelling with his sister."

"Capital! How did you get this passport?"

"When I went to ask M. de Monte-Cristo for letters for the directors of the theatres at Rome and at Naples, I expressed my fears of travelling as a female; he perfectly understood them, and undertook to procure for me a man's passport; and two days after I received this, to which I have added with my own hand, 'travelling with his sister.'—"Well," said Eugénie, cheerfully, "we have then only to pack up our trunks; we shall start the evening of the signature, instead of the evening of the wedding—that is all."

"Reflect well, Eugénie!"—"Oh, I have finished all my reflections! I am tired of hearing only of reports, of the end of the month, of up and down of Spanish funds, of Haitian paper. Instead of that, Louise—do you understand?—air, liberty, melody of birds, plains of Lombardy, Venetian canals, Roman palaces, the Bay of Naples. How much have we, Louise?" The young girl to whom this question was addressed drew from an inlaid secrétaire a small portfolio with a lock, in which she counted twenty-three bank-notes.

"Twenty-three thousand francs," said she.

"And as much, at least, in pearls, diamonds, and jewels," said Eugénie.

CHAPTE

THE HOTEL OF TH

AND now let us leave Mademoiselle on their way to Brussels, and return to Master Andrea was a very skilful that, on the first rumour which n approached the door, and, crossing t But we have forgotten to mention (ought not to be omitted ; it was, the *frousseau* of the bride-elect was ex diamonds, cashmere shawls, Valenci all those tempting things, the bare 1 young girls bound with joy, and w passing through this room, Andrea and intelligent, but also provident, f able of the ornaments before him. leaped with a lighter heart from the hands of the gendarmes. Tall and ator, and muscular as a Spartan, he out knowing where to direct his steps himself from the spot where he kne through the Rue Mont Blanc, he f thieves have in avoiding barriers, at he stopped, breathless and panting. the vast wilderness of the Saint-Laz ness. "Am I lost?" he cried ; "n my enemies. My safety is now : moment he perceived a cab at the

"A very easy thing, if your horse be not tired."

"I tell you he will go like the wind, only tell me which way to drive."

"Towards the Louvres."—"Ah! I know it!—the land of ratafia."

"Exactly so; I merely wish to overtake one of my friends, with whom I am going to hunt to-morrow at Chapelle-en-Serval. He should have waited for me here with a cabriolet till half-past eleven; it is twelve, and, tired of waiting, he must have gone on."—"It is likely."

"Well, will you try and overtake him?"

"Nothing I should like better."—"If you do not overtake him before we reach Bourget you shall have twenty francs; if not before Louvres, thirty."

"And if we do overtake him?"—"Forty," said Andrea, after a moment's hesitation, at the end of which he remembered that he might safely promise. "That will do!" said the man; "get in, and we're off! Prrrrouuu!"

Andrea got into the cab, which passed rapidly through the Faubourg St. Denis, along the Faubourg St. Martin, crossed the barrier, and threaded its way through the interminable Villette. They never overtook the chimerical friend, yet Andrea frequently inquired of walking passers and at the inns which were not yet closed, for a green cabriolet and bay horse; and as there are a great many cabriolets to be seen on the road to the Pays-Bas, and nine-tenths of them are green, the inquiries increased at every step. Every one had just seen it pass; it was only five hundred, two hundred, one hundred steps in advance; at length they reached it, but it was not the friend. Once the cab was also passed by a calèche rapidly whirled along by two post-horses. "Ah!" said Cavalcanti to himself, "if I only had that britska, those two good post-horses, and, above all, the passport that carries them on!" And he sighed deeply. The calèche contained Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly. "Onwards! onwards!" said Andrea, "we must overtake him soon." And the poor horse resumed the desperate gallop it had never slackened since leaving the barrier, and arrived smoking at Louvres.

"Certainly," said Andrea, "I shall not overtake my friend, but I shall kill your horse, therefore I had better stop. Here are thirty francs, I will sleep at the Cheval Rouge, and will secure a place in the first coach. Good-night, friend!" And Andrea, after placing six pieces of five francs each in the man's hand, leaped lightly on to the pathway. The coachman joyfully pocketed the sum, and turned back on his road to Paris. Andrea pretended to go towards the hotel of the Cheval Rouge, but after stopping an instant against the door, and hearing the last sound of the cab, which was disappearing to view, he went on his road, and with a firm tread prepared for a walk of two leagues. There he rested; he must be near Chapelle-en-Serval, where he pretended to be going. It was not fatigue that stayed Andrea here; it was that he might form some resolution, adopt some plan. It would be impossible to make use of a diligence, equally so to engage post-horses; to travel either way a passport was necessary. It would also be impossible to remain in the department of the Oise, one of the most open and strictly guarded in France; this was quite impossible, especially to a man like Andrea, perfectly conversant on criminal matters. He sat down by the side of the moat, buried his face in his hands and reflected. Ten minutes after he raised his head; his resolution was made. He threw some dust over the paletôt, which he had found time to unhook from the ante-chamber and button over his ball costume, and, going to Chapelle-en-Serval, he knocked loudly at the door of the only inn in the place. The

and a faint smile played upon his white lips and pallid cheeks. He looked round and saw the objects of his search upon the chimney-piece; they were a pen, ink, and paper. With forced composure he dipped the pen in the ink, and wrote the following lines upon a sheet of paper:—

"I have no money to pay my bill, but I am not a dishonest man; I leave behind me as a pledge this pin, worth ten times the amount. I shall be excused for escaping at daybreak, for I was ashamed."

He then drew the pin from his cravat and placed it on the paper. This done, instead of leaving the door fastened, he drew back the bolts, and even placed the door ajar, as though he had left the room, forgetting to close it, and, sliding up the chimney like a man accustomed to those sort of gymnastic exercises, having effaced the very marks of his feet upon the floor, he commenced climbing the hollow tunnel, which afforded him the only means of escape left. At this precise time, the first gendarme Andreu had noticed walked up-stairs, preceded by the commissaire of police, and supported by the second gendarme who guarded the staircase, and was himself reinforced by the one stationed at the door. Andreu was indebted for this visit to the following circumstances:—At daybreak, the telegraphs were set at work in all directions; and almost immediately the authorities in every district had exerted their utmost endeavours to arrest the murderer of Caderousse. Compiègne, that royal residence and fortified town, is well furnished with authorities, gendarmes, and commissaires de police: they, therefore, commenced operations as soon as the telegraphic despatch arrived; and the Bell and Bottle being the first hotel in the town, they had naturally directed their first inquiries there. Now, besides the reports of the sentinels guarding the Hôtel de Ville, which is next door to the Bell and Bottle, it had been stated that a number of travellers had arrived there during the night. The sentinel who was

ceived that the latter, instead of retiring, as might have been reasonably expected upon this announcement, were watching with increased attention. It was now his turn to look about him : the Hôtel de Ville, a massive building of the sixteenth century, was on his right ; any one could descend from the openings in the tower, and examine every corner of the roof below ; and Andrea expected momentarily to see the head of a gendarme appear at one of these openings. If once discovered, he knew he would be lost, for a chase on the roof afforded no chance of success ; he therefore resolved to descend, not through the same chimney by which he arrived, but by a similar one conducting to another room. He looked round for a chimney from which no smoke issued, and having reached it, he disappeared through the orifice without being seen by any one. At the same minute, one of the little windows of the Hôtel de Ville was thrown open, and the head of a gendarme appeared. For an instant it remained motionless as one of the stone decorations of the building, then, after a long sigh of disappointment, the head disappeared. The brigadier, calm and dignified as the law he represented, passed through the crowd, without answering the thousand questions addressed to him, and re-entered the hotel.

"Well?" asked the two gendarmes.

"Well, my boys," said the brigadier, "the brigand must really have escaped early this morning ; but we will send to the roads of Villers-Coterets and Noyon, and search the forest, when we shall catch him, no doubt." The honourable functionary had scarcely expressed himself thus, in that intonation which is peculiar to brigadiers of the gendarmerie, when a loud scream, accompanied by the violent ringing of a bell, resounded through the court of the hotel. "Ah ! what is that?" cried the brigadier.

"Some traveller seems impatient," said the host. "What number was it rang?"—"Number 3."—"Run, waiter!" At this moment the screams and ringing were redoubled. "Aha!" said the brigadier, stopping the servant, "the person who is ringing appears to want something more than a waiter ; we will attend upon him with a gendarme. Who occupies Number 3?"—"The little fellow who arrived last night in a post-chaise with his sister, and who asked for a double-bedded room." The bell here rang for a third time, with another shriek full of anguish.

"Follow me, M. le Commissaire!" said the brigadier ; "tread in my steps."—"Wait an instant," said the host ; "Number 3 has two staircases, an interior and an exterior."

"Good!" said the brigadier. "I will take charge of the interior. Are the carbines loaded?"—"Yes, brigadier."

"Well, you guard the exterior, and if he attempt to fly, fire upon him ; he must be a great criminal, from what the telegraph says."

The brigadier, followed by the commissaire, disappeared by the interior staircase, accompanied by the noise which his assertions respecting Andrea had excited in the crowd. This is what had happened : Andrea had very cleverly managed to descend two-thirds of the chimney, but then his foot slipped, and notwithstanding his endeavours, he came into the room with more speed and noise than he intended. It would have signified little had the room been empty, but unfortunately it was occupied. Two ladies, sleeping in one bed, were awakened by the noise, and fixing their eyes upon the spot whence the sound proceeded, they saw a man. One of these ladies, the fair one, uttered those terrible shrieks which resounded through the house ; while the other, rushing to the bell-rope, rang with all her strength. Andrea, as we can see, was surrounded by misfortune.

"For pity's sake," he cried, pale and bewildered, without seeing whom

"Well ! be it so," at length said you came, and we will say nothing :

"Here he is ! here he is !" cried a is ! I see him !" The brigadier had perceived Andrea standing and entreati of the musket burst open the lock, broken door fell in. Andrea ran to ready to rush out ; but he was stopp a little thrown back, pale, and wi hand.

"Fly, then !" cried Mademoiselle fears diminished : "Fly !"——" Or which a Vestal in the circle would ha gladiator to finish his vanquished looked on the young girl with an e understood such ferocious honour down his knife ; "why should I do Mademoiselle Danglars, "that you worst criminals."

"Bah !" said Cavalcanti, crossing The brigadier advanced to him : Andrea, "sheathe your sword, my f such a fuss, since I yield myself ;" an The two girls looked with horror up of the world shaking off his cov Andrea turned towards them, and "Have you any message for your all probability, I shall return to Par

Eugénie covered her face with "you need not be ashamed, even t

the Roman world had but one neck, that he might sever it at a single blow. The next day they stopped at the Hôtel de Flandre, at Brussels. The same evening Andrea was secured in the Conciergerie.

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE LAW.

WE have seen how quietly Mademoiselle Danglars and Mademoiselle d'Armilly accomplished their transformation and flight ; the fact being that every one was too much occupied in his or her own affairs to think of theirs. We will leave the banker contemplating the enormous columns of his debt before the phantom of bankruptcy, and follow the baroness, who, after remaining for a moment as if crushed under the weight of the blow which had struck her, had gone to seek her usual adviser, Lucien Debray. The baroness had looked forward to this marriage as a means of ridding her of a guardianship which, over a girl of Eugénie's character, could not fail to be rather a troublesome undertaking ; for in those tacit understandings which maintain the bond of family union, the mother is only really the mistress of her daughter upon the condition of continually presenting herself to her as a model of wisdom and type of perfection. Now, Madame Danglars feared the penetration of Eugénie and the advice of Mademoiselle d'Armilly ; she had frequently observed the contemptuous expression with which her daughter looked upon Debray,—an expression which seemed to imply that she understood all her mother's amorous and pecuniary relationships with the intimate secretary ; moreover, she saw that Eugénie detested Debray, not only because he was a cause of dissension and scandal in the paternal roof, but because she had at once classed him in that catalogue of bipeds whom Plato endeavours to withdraw from the appellation of men, and whom Diogenes designated as animals upon two legs without feathers. Unfortunately, in this world of ours, each person views things through a certain medium, which prevents him seeing them in the same light as others ; and Madame Danglars, therefore, very much regretted that the marriage of Eugénie had not taken place, not only because the match was good, and likely to ensure the happiness of her child, but because it would also set her at liberty. She ran therefore to Debray's, who, after having, like the rest of Paris, witnessed the contract scene and the scandal attending it, had retired in haste to his club, where he was chatting with some friends upon the events, which served as a subject of conversation for three-fourths of that city, known as the capital of the world. At the precise time when Madame Danglars, dressed in black and concealed in a long veil, was ascending the stairs leading to the apartments of Debray, notwithstanding the assurances of the young man that his master was not at home, Debray was occupied in repelling the insinuations of a friend, who tried to persuade him that after the terrible scene which had just taken place he ought, as a friend of the family, to marry Mademoiselle Danglars and her two millions. Debray did not defend himself very warmly, for the idea had sometimes crossed his mind ; still, when he recollected the independent, proud spirit of Eugénie, he positively rejected it as utterly impossible, though the same thought again continually recurred, and found a resting-place in his heart. Tea, play, and the conversation, which had become interesting during the discussion of such serious affairs, lasted till one o'clock in the morning.

Meanwhile Madame Danglars, veiled and fainting, awaited the return

exercisement of the evening, she had called her lady's maid and question

"Mademoiselle Eugénie," she said, "Mademoiselle d'Armilly; they the desired me to leave, saying they the lady's maid had been below, and, young ladies were in their own room to bed without a shadow of suspicious events. In proportion as her ideas the scene of the contract increase in mere confusion; it was a tumult; but disgraceful. And then the banality for poor Mercédès, who had through her husband and son.

"Eugénie," she said to herself, "it will be reported, will cover us with satire inflicts a painful and incurable disease is possessed of that strange characteristic!" And her glance was turned towards Providence disposes all this vice, sometimes produces a blessing through space as a bird in the air, a wretch, a robber, an assassin, and a victim, if not a complete one; he had the appearance of an immense fortune. How could she extricate herself from this? she apply to help her out of this predicament had run, with the first instinct of a victim who yet betrays her,—Debray could someone more powerful than he. The Count de Villaforte who had

The conduct of Villefort, therefore, upon reflection, appeared to the baroness as if shaped for their mutual advantage. But the inflexibility of the procureur du roi should stop there ; she would see him the next day, and if she could not make him fail in his duties as a magistrate, she would, at least, obtain all the indulgence he could allow. She would invoke the past, recall old recollections ; she would supplicate him by the remembrance of guilty, yet happy days. M. de Villefort would stifle the affair ; he had only to turn his eyes on one side, and allow Andrea to fly, and only pursue the crime under that shadow of guilt called contempt of court. And after this reasoning she slept easily.

At nine o'clock next morning she rose, and without ringing for her maid, or giving the least sign of her existence, she dressed herself in the same simple style as on the previous night ; then running down stairs, she left the hotel, walked to the Rue de Provence, called a fiacre, and drove to M. de Villefort's house. For the last month this wretched house had presented the gloomy appearance of a lazaretto infected with the plague. Some of the apartments were closed within and without ; the shutters were only opened to admit a minute's air, showing the scared face of a footman, and immediately afterwards the window would be closed, like a gravestone falling on a sepulchre ; and the neighbours would say to each other in a low voice, " Shall we to-day see another bier leave the house of M. le Procureur du Roi ? " Madame Danglars involuntarily shuddered at the aspect of the desolate house ; descending from the fiacre, she approached the door with trembling knees, and rang the bell. Three times did the bell ring with a dull, heavy sound, seeming to participate in the general sadness, before the concierge appeared and peeped through the door, which he opened just wide enough to allow his words to be heard. He saw a lady, a fashionable, elegantly-dressed lady, and yet the door remained almost closed.

" Do you intend opening the door ? " said the baroness.

" First, madam, who are you ? "

" Who am I ? You know me well enough. "

" We no longer know any one, madam. "

" You must be mad, my friend, " said the baroness.

" Where do you come from ? " — " Oh ! this is too much ! "

" Madam, these are my orders ; excuse me. Your name ? "

" The Baroness Danglars : you have seen me twenty times. "

" Possibly, madam. And now, what do you want ? "

" Oh, how extraordinary ! I shall complain to M. de Villefort of the impertinence of his servants. "

" Madam, this is precaution, not impertinence ; no one enters here without an order from M. d'Avrigny, or without speaking to M. le Procureur du Roi. "

" Well ! my business is with M. le Procureur du Roi. "

" Is it pressing business ? " — " You can imagine so, since I have not even brought my carriage out yet. But enough of this ; here is my card take it to your master. "

" Madame will await my return ? " — " Yes ; go. " The concierge closed the door, leaving Madame Danglars in the street. She had not long to wait ; directly afterwards the door was opened wide enough to admit her, and when she had passed through, it was again closed. Without losing sight of her for an instant, the concierge took a watch from his pocket as soon as they entered the court, and sounded it. A valet-de-chambre appeared on the door-steps. " You will excuse the

fellow, madam," he said, as he preceded the baroness; "but his orders are precise, and M. de Villefort begged me to tell you he could not act otherwise than he had done."

In the court was a tradesman showing his merchandise, who had been admitted with the same precautions. The baroness ascended the steps; she felt herself strongly infected with the sadness which, as it were, seemed to enlarge the circle of her own, and still guided by the valet-de-chambre, who never lost sight of her for an instant, she was introduced to the study of the magistrate. Pre-occupied as Madame Danglars had been with the object of her visit, the treatment she had received from these underlings appeared to her so insulting, that she began by complaining of it. But Villefort, raising his head, bowed down by grief, looked up at her with so sad a smile that her complaints died upon her lips. "Forgive my servants," he said, "for a terror I cannot blame them for; from being suspected they have become suspicious."

Madame Danglars had often heard of the terror to which the magistrate alluded, but without the evidence of her own eyesight she could never have believed the sentiment had been carried so far. "You too, then, are unhappy?" she said. "Yes, madam," replied the magistrate.

"Then you pity me!"—"Sincerely, madam."—"And you understand what brings me here?"—"You wish to speak to me about the circumstance which has just happened?"—"Yes, sir, a fearful misfortune."—"You mean a mischance."—"A mischance!" repeated the baroness. "Alas! madam," said the procureur du roi, with his imperturbable calmness of manner, "I consider those alone misfortunes which are irreparable."—"And do you suppose this will be forgotten?"—"Everything will be forgotten, madam," said Villefort. "Your daughter will be married to-morrow, if not to-day—in a week, if not to-morrow; and I do not think you can regret the intended husband of your daughter." Madame Danglars gazed on Villefort, stupefied to find him so almost insultingly calm. "Am I come to a friend?" she asked, in a tone full of mournful dignity. "You know that you are, madam," said Villefort, whose pale cheeks became slightly flushed as he gave her the assurance. And truly this assurance carried him back to different events to those now occupying the baroness and him. "Well, then, be more affectionate, my dear Villefort," said the baroness. "Speak to me not as a magistrate, but as a friend; and when I am in bitter anguish of spirit, do not tell me I ought to be gay." Villefort bowed. "When I hear misfortunes named, madam," he said, "I have within the last few months contracted the bad habit of thinking of my own, and then I cannot help drawing up an egotistical parallel in my mind. This is the reason that by the side of my misfortunes yours appear to me mere mischances; this is why my dreadful position makes yours appear enviable. But this annoys you; let us change the subject. You were saying, madam——"

"I came to ask you, my friend," said the baroness, "what will be done with this impostor?"—"Impostor!" repeated Villefort; "certainly, madam, you appear to extenuate some cases, and exaggerate others. Impostor, indeed! M. Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather M. Benedetto, is nothing more nor less than an assassin!"

"Sir, I do not deny the justice of your correction; but the more severely you arm yourself against that unfortunate, the more deeply will you strike our family. Come, forget him for a moment, and, instead of pursuing him, let him fly."—"You are too late, madam; the orders are issued."

"Well, should he be arrested—do you think they will arrest him?"

"I hope so."—"If they should arrest him (I know that sometimes prisons afford means of escape), will you leave him in prison?"—The procureur du roi shook his head. "At least keep him there till my daughter be married."

"Impossible, madam; justice has its formalities."—"What! even for me?" said the baroness, half jesting, half in earnest. "For all, even for myself among the rest," replied Villefort.

"Ah!" exclaimed the baroness, without expressing the ideas which the exclamation betrayed. Villefort looked at her with that piercing glance which read the secrets of the heart. "Yes, I know what you mean," he said; "you allude to those terrible rumours spread abroad in the world, that all those deaths which have kept me in mourning for the last three months, and from which Valentine has only escaped by a miracle, have not happened by natural means."—"I was not thinking of that," replied Madame Danglars quickly. "Yes, you were thinking of it, and with justice. You could not help thinking of it, and saying to yourself, 'You, who pursue crime so vindictively, answer now, why are there unpunished crimes in your dwelling?'" The baroness became pale. "You were saying this, were you not?"—"Well, I own it."—"I will answer you." Villefort drew his arm-chair nearer to Madame Danglars; then, resting both hands upon his desk, he said, in a voice more hollow than usual: "There are crimes which remain unpunished because the criminals are unknown, and we might strike the innocent instead of the guilty; but when the culprits are discovered" (Villefort here extended his hand towards a large crucifix placed opposite to his desk)—when they are discovered, I swear to you, by all I hold most sacred, that, whoever they may be, they shall die. Now, after the oath I have just taken, and which I will keep, madam, dare you ask for mercy for that wretch?"—"But, sir, are you sure he is as guilty as they say?"—"Listen; this is his description: 'Benedetto, condemned, at the age of sixteen, for five years to the galleys for forgery.' He promised well, as you see—first a runaway, then an assassin."

"And who is this wretch?"—"Who can tell?—a vagabond, a Corsican."—"Has no one owned him?"—"No one; his parents are unknown."—"But who was the man who brought him from Lucca?"

"Another rascal like himself, perhaps his accomplice." The baroness clasped her hands. "Villefort!" she exclaimed, in her softest and most captivating manner. "For Heaven's sake, madam," said Villefort, with a firmness of expression not altogether free from harshness—"for Heaven's sake, do not ask pardon of me for a guilty wretch! What am I?—the law. Has the law any eyes to witness your grief? Has the law ears to be melted by your sweet voice? Has the law a memory for all those soft recollections you endeavour to recall? No, madam; the law has commanded, and when it commands it strikes. You will tell me that I am a living being, and not a code—a man, and not a volume. Look at me, madam—look around me. Have mankind treated me as a brother? Have they loved me? Have they spared me? Has any one shown the mercy towards me that you now ask at my hands? No, madam, they struck me, always struck me! Woman! siren that you are, do you persist in fixing on me that fascinating eye, which reminds me that I ought to blush? Well, be it so; let me blush for the faults you know, and perhaps—perhaps for even more than those! But having sinned myself, it may be more deeply than others, I never rest till I have torn the disguises from my fellow-creatures, and found out their weaknesses. I have always found them; and more, I repeat with joy, with triumph, I have always found

some proof of human perversity or error. Every criminal I condemn seems to me a living proof that I am not a hideous exception to the rest. Alas, alas, alas! all the world is wicked; let us therefore strike at wickedness!"

Villefort pronounced these last words with a feverish rage, which gave a ferocious eloquence to his words.

"But," said Madame Danglars, resolving to make a last effort, "this young man, though a murderer, is an orphan, abandoned by everybody."

"So much the worse, or rather, so much the better; it has been so ordained that he may have none to weep his fate."

"But this is trampling on the weak, sir."

"The weakness of a murderer!"—"His dishonour reflects upon us."

"Is not death in my house?"—"Oh, sir," exclaimed the baroness, "you are without pity for others! Well, then, I tell you they will have no mercy on you!"

"Be it so!" said Villefort, raising his arms to heaven.

"At least, delay the trial till the next assizes; we shall then have six months before us."—"No, madam," said Villefort; "instructions have been given. There are yet five days left; five days are more than I require. Do you not think that I also long for forgetfulness? While working night and day, I sometimes lose all recollection of the past, and then I experience the same sort of happiness I can imagine the dead to feel; still, it is better than suffering."

"But, sir, he has fled; let him escape—inaction is a pardonable offence."

"I tell you it is too late; early this morning the telegraph was employed, and at this very minute——"

"Sir," said the valet-de-chambre, entering the room, "a dragoon has brought this despatch from the Minister of the Interior." Villefort seized the letter, and hastily unsealed it. Madame Danglars trembled with fear; Villefort started with joy. "Arrested!" he exclaimed; "he was taken at Compiègne, and all is over." Madame Danglars rose from her seat, pale and cold. "Adieu, sir!" she said. "Adieu, madam!" replied the procureur du roi, as in an almost joyful manner he conducted her to the door. Then, turning to his desk, he said, striking the letter with his right hand, "Come, I had a forgery, three robberies, and two incendiaries; I only wanted a murder, and here it is. It will be a splendid session!"

CHAPTER C.

THE APPARITION.

As the procureur du roi had told Madame Danglars, Valentine was not yet recovered. Bowed down with fatigue, she was indeed confined to her bed, and it was in her own room, and from the lips of Madame de Villefort, that she heard all the strange events we have related: we mean the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Andrea Cavalcanti, or rather Benedetto, together with the accusation of murder pronounced against him. But Valentine was so weak that this recital scarcely produced the same effect it would have done had she been in her usual state of health. Indeed, her brain was only the seat of vague ideas; and confused forms, mingled with strange *fancies*, alone presented themselves before her eyes. During the daytime Valentine's perceptions remained tolerably clear, owing to the constant presence of M. Noirtier, who caused himself to be carried to his granddaughter's room, and watched her with his paternal tenderness; Villefort

also, on his return from the palais, frequently passed an hour or two with his father and child. At six o'clock Villefort retired to his study, at eight M. d'Avrigny arrived himself, bringing the night draught prepared for the young girl, and then M. Noirtier was carried away. A nurse of the doctor's choice succeeded them, and never left till about ten or eleven o'clock, when Valentine was asleep. As she went downstairs she gave the keys of Valentine's room to M. Villefort, so that no one could reach the sick-room excepting through that of Madame de Villefort and little Edward's. Every morning Morrel called on Noirtier to receive news of Valentine, and, extraordinary as it seemed, each day found him less uneasy. Certainly, though Valentine still laboured under dreadful nervous excitement, she was better; and moreover, Monte-Cristo had told him when, half-distracted, he had rushed to his house, that if she was not dead in two hours she was saved. Now four days had elapsed, and Valentine still lived. The nervous excitement of which we speak pursued Valentine even in her sleep, or rather in that state of somnolence which succeeded her waking hours; it was, then, in the silence of night, in the dim light shed from the alabaster lamp on the chimney-piece, that she saw those shadows pass and repass which hover over the bed of sickness, and fan the fever with their trembling wings. First she fancied she saw her stepmother threatening her, then Morrel stretched his arms towards her; sometimes mere strangers, like the Count of Monte-Cristo, appeared to visit her; even the very furniture, in these moments of delirium, seemed to move; and this state lasted till about three o'clock in the morning, when a deep heavy slumber overcame the young girl, from which she did not awake till morning. On the evening of the day on which Valentine had learnt the flight of Eugénie and the arrest of Benedetto, Villefort having retired as well as Noirtier and d'Avrigny, her thoughts wandered in a confused maze, alternately reviewing her own situation and the events she had just heard.

Eleven o'clock had struck. The nurse, having placed the beverage prepared by the doctor within reach of the patient, and locked the door, was listening with terror to the comments of the servants in the kitchen, and storing her memory with all the horrible stories which had for some months past amused the occupants of the antechambers in the house of the procureur du roi. Meanwhile an unexpected scene was passing in the room which had been so carefully locked. Ten minutes had elapsed since the nurse had left; Valentine, who for the last hour had been suffering from the fever which returned nightly, incapable of controlling her ideas, was forced to yield to the excitement which exhausted itself in producing and reproducing a succession and recurrence of the same fancies and images. The night-lamp threw out countless rays, each resolving itself into some strange form to her disordered imagination, when suddenly, by its flickering light, Valentine thought she saw the door of her library, which was in the recess by the chimney-piece, open slowly, though she in vain listened for the sound of the hinges on which it turned. At any other time Valentine would have seized the silken bell-pull, and summoned assistance, but nothing astonished her in her present situation. Her reason told her that all the visions she beheld were but the children of her imagination, and the conviction was strengthened by the fact that in the morning no traces remained of the nocturnal phantoms, who disappeared with the daylight. Behind the door a human figure appeared; but she was too familiar with such apparitions to be alarmed, and therefore only stared, hoping to recognise Morrel. The figure advanced towards the bed, and appeared to listen with profound

"And have they all tasted of a slightly bitter flavour, like that of dried orange-peel?"

"Oh, yes! oh, yes!"—"Then that explains all," said Monte-Cristo. "Your grandfather knows, then, that a poisoner lives here; perhaps, he even suspects the person. He has been fortifying you, his beloved child, against the fatal effects of the poison, which would have failed from the constant habit of imbibing it. But even this would have availed little against a more deadly medium of death employed four days ago, which is generally but too fatal."

"But who, then, is this assassin, this murderer?"—"Let me also ask you a question. Have you never seen any one enter your room at night?"—"Oh! yes; I have frequently seen shadows pass close to me, approach, and disappear; but I took them for visions raised by my feverish imagination; and, indeed, when you entered, I thought I was under the influence of delirium."

"Then you do not know who it is that attempts your life?"

"No," said Valentine; "who could desire my death?"

"You shall know it now, then," said Monte-Cristo, listening.

"How do you mean?" said Valentine, looking terrified around.

"Because you are not feverish or delirious to-night, but thoroughly awake; midnight is striking, which is the hour murderers choose."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Valentine, wiping off the drops which ran down her forehead. Midnight struck slowly and sadly; every hour seemed to strike with leaden weight upon the heart of the poor girl. "Valentine," said the count, "summon up all your courage; still the beatings of your heart; do not let a sound escape you, and feign to be asleep; then you will see." Valentine seized the count's hand. "I think I hear a noise," she said; "leave me."

"Good-bye, for the present," replied the count, walking upon tiptoe towards the library door, and smiling with an expression so sad and paternal, that the young girl's heart was filled with gratitude. Before closing the door he turned round once more, and said, "Not a movement—not a word; let them think you asleep; or, perhaps, you may be killed before I have the power of helping you." And with this fearful injunction the count disappeared through the door, which noiselessly closed after him.

CHAPTER CI.

THE SERPENT.

VALENTINE was alone; two other clocks, slower than that of St. Philippe du Roule, struck the hour of midnight from different situations; and, excepting the rumbling of a few carriages, all was silent. Then Valentine's attention was engrossed by the clock in her room, which marked the seconds. She began counting them, remarking that they were much slower than the beatings of her heart; and still she doubted: the inoffensive Valentine could not imagine any one desiring her death. Why should they? To what end? What had she done to excite the malice of an enemy? There was no fear of her falling asleep. One terrible idea pressed upon her mind, that some one existed in the world who had attempted to assassinate her, and who was about to endeavour to do so again. Supposing this person, wearied at the inefficacy of the poison, should, as Monte-Cristo said, have recourse to steel!—What if the count

should have no time to run to her rescue !—What if her last moments were approaching, and she would never again see Morrel ! When this terrible chain of ideas presented itself, Valentine was nearly persuaded to ring the bell, and call for help. But through the door she fancied she saw the luminous eye of the count—that eye which lived in her memory, and the recollection overwhelmed her with so much shame, that she asked herself whether any amount of gratitude could ever repay his dangerous and devoted friendship. Twenty minutes, twenty tedious minutes, passed thus, then ten more, and at last the clock struck the half-hour. Just then the sound of finger-nails slightly grating against the door of the library informed Valentine that the count was still watching, and recommended her to do the same ; at the same time, on the opposite side, that is, towards Edward's room, Valentine fancied she heard the creaking of the floor ; she listened attentively, holding her breath till she was nearly suffocated ; the lock turned, and the door slowly opened. Valentine had raised herself upon her elbow, and had scarcely time to throw herself down on the bed and shade her eyes with her arm ; then, trembling, agitated, and her heart beating with indescribable terror, she waited the event.

Some one approached the bed and undrew the curtains. Valentine summoned every effort, and breathed with that regular respiration which announces tranquil sleep. "Valentine !" said a low voice. Still silent : Valentine had promised not to wake. Then everything remained still, excepting that Valentine heard the almost noiseless sound of some liquid being poured into the glass she had just emptied. Then she ventured to open her eyelids, and glance over her extended arm. She saw a female in a white dressing-gown pouring a liquor from a phial into her glass. During this short time Valentine must have held her breath, or moved in some slight degree, for the woman, disturbed, stopped and leaned over the bed, in order the better to ascertain whether Valentine slept : it was Madame de Villefort.

On recognising her step-mother, Valentine could not repress a shudder, which caused a vibration in the bed. Madame de Villefort instantly stepped back close to the wall, and there, shaded by the bed-curtains, she silently and attentively watched the slightest movement of Valentine. The latter recollected the terrible caution of Monte-Cristo ; she fancied that the hand not holding the phial clasped a long sharp knife. Then collecting all her remaining strength, she forced herself to close her eyes ; but this simple operation upon the most delicate organs of our frame, generally so easy to accomplish, became almost impossible at this moment, so much did curiosity struggle to retain the eyelid open and learn the truth. Madame de Villefort, however, reassured by the silence, which was alone disturbed by the regular breathing of Valentine, again extended her hand, and, half hidden by the curtains, succeeded in emptying the contents of the phial into the glass. Then she retired so gently that Valentine did not know she had left the room. She only witnessed the withdrawal of the arm—that fair round arm, of a woman but twenty-five years old, and who yet spread death around her.

It is impossible to describe the sensations experienced by Valentine during the minute and a half Madame de Villefort remained in the room. The grating against the library-door roused the young girl from the state of stupor in which she was plunged, and which almost amounted to insensibility. She raised her head with an effort. The noiseless door again turned on its hinges, and the Count of Monte-Cristo reappeared.

"Well," said he, "do you still doubt?"—"Oh!" murmured the young girl.

"Have you seen?"—"Alas!"

"Did you recognise?" Valentine groaned. "Oh, yes!" she said, "I saw, but I cannot believe!"—"Would you rather die, then, and cause Maximilian's death?"

"Oh!" repeated the young girl, almost bewildered, "can I not leave the house?—can I not escape?"—"Valentine, the hand which now threatens you will pursue you everywhere; your servants will be seduced with gold, and death will be offered to you disguised in every shape. You will find it in the water you drink from the spring, in the fruit you pluck from the tree."

"But did you not say that my kind grandfather's precaution had neutralised the poison?"—"Yes, but not against a strong dose; the poison will be changed, and the quantity increased." He took the glass and raised it to his lips. "It is already done," he said; "*brucine* is no longer employed, but a simple narcotic! I can recognise the flavour of the alcohol in which it has been dissolved. If you had taken that which Madame de Villefort has poured into your glass, Valentine! Valentine! you would have been lost!"

"But," exclaimed the young girl, "why am I thus pursued?"

"How! are you so kind—so good—so unsuspicious of ill, that you cannot understand, Valentine?"

"No, I have never injured her."—"But you are rich, Valentine; you have 200,000 livres a year, and you prevent her son from enjoying these 200,000 livres."

"How so? The fortune is not her gift, but is inherited from my relations!"—"Certainly; and this is why M. and Madame de Saint-Méran have died; this is why M. Noirtier was sentenced the day he made you his heir; this is why you, in your turn, are to die: it is because your father would inherit your property, and your brother, his only son, succeed to his."

"Edward? Poor child! are all these crimes committed on his account?"—"Ah! then you at length understand?"

"Heaven grant that this may not be visited upon him!"

"Valentine, you are an angel!"

"But why is my grandfather allowed to live?"—"It was considered, that you dead, the fortune would naturally revert to your brother, unless he were disinherited; and besides, the crime appearing useless, it would be folly to commit it."

"And is it possible that this frightful combination of crimes has been invented by a woman?"—"Do you recollect in the arbour of the Hotel des Postes, at Perusa, seeing a man in a brown cloak, whom your step-mother was questioning upon *acqua tofana*? Well, ever since then, the infernal project has been ripening in her brain."

"Ah, then, indeed, sir," said the sweet girl, bathed in tears, "I see that I am condemned to die!"—"No, Valentine, for I have foreseen all their plots; no, your enemy is conquered since we know her, and you will live, Valentine—live to be happy yourself, and to confer happiness upon a noble heart; but to insure this you must rely on me."

"Command me, sir—what am I to do?"

"You must blindly take what I give you."

"Alas! were it only for my own sake, I should prefer to die!"

"You must not confide in any one—not even in your father."

"My father is not engaged in this fearful plot, is he, sir?" asked Valentine, clasping her hands.—"No; and yet your father, a man accustomed to judicial accusations, ought to have known that all these deaths have not happened naturally; it is he who should have watched over you—he should have occupied my place—he should have emptied that glass—he should have risen against the assassin. Spectre against spectre!" he murmured in a low voice, as he concluded his sentence.

"Sir," said Valentine, "I will do all I can to live, for there are two beings whose existence depends upon mine—my grandfather and Maximilian."—"I will watch over them as I have over you."

"Well, sir, do as you will with me;" and then she added, in a low voice,—"Oh, Heavens! what will befall me?"—"Whatever may happen, Valentine, do not be alarmed; though you suffer; though you lose sight, hearing, consciousness, fear nothing; though you should awake and be ignorant where you are, still do not fear; even though you should find yourself in a sepulchral vault or coffin. Reassure yourself, then, and reflect: 'At this moment, a friend, a father, who lives for my happiness and that of Maximilian, watches over me!'"

"Alas! alas! what a fearful extremity!"

"Valentine, would you rather denounce your step-mother?"

"I would rather die a hundred times—oh, yes, die!"

"No, you will not die; but will you promise me, whatever happens, that you will not complain, but hope?"

"I will think of Maximilian!"—"You are my own darling child, Valentine! I alone can save you, and I will!" Valentine, in the extremity of her terror, joined her hands, for she felt that the moment had arrived to ask for courage, and began to pray; and while uttering little more than incoherent words, she forgot that her white shoulders had no other covering than her long hair, and that her heart could be seen beating through the lace of her night-dress. Monte-Cristo gently laid his hand on the young girl's arm, drew the velvet coverlid close to her throat, and said, with a paternal smile,—*"My child, believe in my devotion to you as you believe in the goodness of Providence and the love of Maximilian."*

Then he drew from his waistcoat-pocket the little emerald box, raised the golden lid, and took from it a pastille, about the size of a pea, which he placed in her hand. She took it, and looked attentively on the count; there was an expression on the face of her intrepid protector which commanded her veneration. She evidently interrogated him by her look. "Yes," said he. Valentine carried the pastille to her mouth, and swallowed it. "And now, my dear child, adieu for the present. I will try and gain a little sleep, for you are saved."—"Go," said Valentine, "whatever happens, I promise you not to fear."

Monte-Cristo for some time kept his eyes fixed on the young girl, who gradually fell asleep, yielding to the effects of the narcotic the count had given her. Then he took the glass, emptied three parts of the contents in the fireplace, that it might be supposed Valentine had taken it, and replaced it on the table; then he disappeared, after throwing a farewell glance on Valentine, who slept with the confidence and innocence of an angel.

CHAPTER CIL.

VALENTINE.

THE night-light continued to burn on the chimney-piece, exhausting the last drops of oil which floated on the surface of the water, the globe of the lamp appeared of a reddish hue, and the flame, brightening before it expired, threw out those last flickerings which in an inanimate object have been so often compared with the last convulsions in a human frame; a dull and dismal light was shed over the bedclothes and curtains surrounding the young girl. All noise in the streets had ceased, and the silence was frightful. It was then that the door of Edward's room opened, and a head we have before noticed appeared in the glass opposite; it was Madame de Villefort, who came to witness the effects of the draught. She stopped in the doorway, listened for a moment to the flickering of the lamp, the only sound in that deserted room, and then advanced to the table, to see if Valentine's glass were empty. It was still about a quarter full, as we before stated. Madame de Villefort emptied the contents into the ashes, which she disturbed, that they might the more readily absorb the liquid; then she carefully rinsed the glass, and, wiping it with her handkerchief, replaced it on the table. If any one could have looked into the room just then he would have noticed the hesitation with which Madame de Villefort approached the bed, and looked fixedly on Valentine. The dim light, the profound silence, and the gloomy thoughts inspired by the hour, and still more by her own conscience, all combined to produce a sensation of fear; the poisoner was terrified to contemplate her own work. At length she rallied, drew aside the curtain, and leaning over the pillow, gazed intently on Valentine. The young girl no longer breathed, no breath issued through the half-closed teeth; the white lips no longer quivered; the eyes appeared floating in a bluish vapour, and the long black lashes rested on a cheek white as wax. Madame de Villefort gazed upon the face so expressive even in its stillness; then she ventured to raise the coverlid and press her hand upon the young girl's heart. It was cold and motionless. She only felt the pulsation in her own fingers, and withdrew her hand with a shudder. One arm was hanging out of the bed, that beautiful arm which seemed moulded by a sculptor; but the other appeared slightly distorted by convulsion; and the hand, so delicately formed, was resting with stiff outstretched fingers on the framework of the bed. The nails, too, were turning blue. Madame de Villefort had no longer any doubt; all was over; she had consummated the last terrible work she had to accomplish. There was no more to do in the room, so the poisoner retired stealthily, as though fearing to hear the sound of her own footsteps; but as she withdrew she still held aside the curtain, absorbed in the irresistible attraction always offered by the picture of death, so long as it remains merely mysterious without exciting disgust. Just then the lamp again flickered; the noise startled Madame de Villefort, who shuddered and dropped the curtain. Immediately afterwards the light expired, and the room was plunged in terrible obscurity, while the clock at that minute struck half-past four. Overpowered with agitation, the poisoner succeeded in groping her way to the door, and reached her room in an agony of fear. The darkness lasted two hours longer; then by degrees a cold light crept through the Venetian blinds, until at length it revealed the objects in the room. About this time the nurse's cough was heard on the stairs and the woman entered the room with a cup in her hand. To the tender eye of a father or a lover, the first glance would have sufficed to convince them of Valentine's state; but





THE DEATH-BED OF VALENTINE.

to this hireling, Valentine only appeared to sleep. "Good!" she exclaimed, approaching the table, "she has taken part of her draught; the glass is three-quarters empty."

Then she went to the fireplace and lit the fire, and although she had but just left her bed, she could not resist the temptation offered by Valentine's sleep, so she threw herself into an arm-chair to snatch a little more rest. The clock striking eight awoke her. Astonished at the prolonged sleep of the patient, and frightened to see that the arm was still hanging out of bed, she advanced towards Valentine, and for the first time noticed the white lips. She tried to replace the arm, but it moved with a frightful stiffness which could not deceive a sick-nurse. She screamed aloud; then running to the door exclaimed,—“Help! help!”—“What do you mean?” asked M. d’Avrigny, at the foot of the stairs, it being the hour he usually visited her.

“What do you mean?” asked Villefort, rushing from his room. “Doctor, do you hear them call for help?”—“Yes, yes; let us hasten up; it was in Valentine’s room.” But before the doctor and the father could reach the room, the servants who were on the same floor had entered, and seeing Valentine pale and motionless on her bed, they lifted up their hands towards heaven and stood transfixed, as though struck by lightning. “Call Madame de Villefort!—wake Madame de Villefort!” cried the procureur du roi from the door of his chamber, which it seemed he scarcely dared to leave. But instead of obeying him, the servants stood watching M. d’Avrigny, who ran to Valentine, and raised her in his arms. “What! this one, too!” he exclaimed. “Oh! when will this cease?” Villefort rushed into the room. “What are you saying, doctor?” he exclaimed, raising his hands to heaven.

“I say that Valentine is dead!” replied D’Avrigny, in a voice terrible in its solemn calmness.

M. de Villefort staggered and buried his head in the bed. On the exclamation of the doctor and the cry of the father, the servants all fled with muttered imprecations; they were heard running down the stairs and through the long passages, then there was a rush in the court, afterwards all was still; they had, one and all, deserted from the accursed house. Just then, Madame de Villefort, in the act of slipping on her dressing-gown, threw aside the drapery, and for a moment remained still, as though interrogating the occupants of the room, while she endeavoured to call up some rebellious tears. On a sudden she stepped, or rather bounded, with outstretched arms, towards the table. She saw D’Avrigny curiously examining the glass, which she felt certain of having emptied during the night. It was now a third full, just as it was when she threw the contents into the ashes. The spectre of Valentine rising before the poison would have alarmed her less. It was, indeed, the same colour as the draught she had poured into the glass, and which Valentine had drunk: it was indeed the poison, which could not deceive M. d’Avrigny, which he had examined so closely: it was doubtless a miracle from heaven, that notwithstanding her precautions, there should be some trace of the crime remaining to denounce the crime. While Madame de Villefort stood rooted to the spot like a statue of terror, and Valentine, who had been hidden in the bedclothes, saw nothing around her, D’Avrigny, who stood by the window, that he might the better examine the contents of the glass, and dipping the tip of his finger in, tasted it. “It is the same,” he said, “no longer brucine that is used; let me see what it is.”

Then he ran to one of the cupboards: M. de Villefort, who had been

transformed into a medicine closet, and taking from its silver case a small bottle of nitric acid, dropped a little of it into the liquor, which immediately changed to a blood-red colour. "Ah!" exclaimed D'Avrigny, in a voice in which the horror of a judge unveiling the truth was mixed with the delight of a student discovering a problem. Madame de Villefort was overpowered; her eyes first flashed and then swam; she staggered towards the door, and disappeared. Directly afterwards the distant sound of a heavy weight falling on the ground was heard, but no one paid any attention to it; the nurse was engaged in watching the chemical analysis, and Villefort was still absorbed in grief. M. d'Avrigny alone had followed Madame de Villefort with his eyes, and watched her precipitate retreat. He lifted up the drapery over the entrance to Edward's room, and his eye reaching as far as Madame de Villefort's apartment, he beheld her extended lifeless on the floor. "Go to the assistance of Madame de Villefort," he said to the nurse. "Madame de Villefort is ill."

"But Mademoiselle de Villefort——" stammered the nurse.

"Mademoiselle de Villefort no longer requires help," said D'Avrigny, "since she is dead."—"Dead!—dead!" groaned forth Villefort, in a paroxysm of grief, which was the more terrible from the novelty of the sensation in the iron heart of that man.

"Dead!" repeated a third voice. "Who said Valentine was dead?"

The two men turned round, and saw Morrel standing at the door, pale and terror-stricken. This is what had happened:—At the usual time, Morrel had presented himself at the little door leading to Noirtier's room. Contrary to custom, the door was open, and, having no occasion to ring, he entered. He waited for a moment in the hall, and called for a servant to conduct him to M. Noirtier; but no one answered, the servants having, as we know, deserted the house. Morrel had no particular reason for uneasiness; Monte-Cristo had promised him that Valentine should live; and, until then, he had always fulfilled his word. Every night the count had given him news, which was the next morning confirmed by Noirtier. Still, this extraordinary silence appeared strange to him, and he called a second and third time; still no answer. Then he determined to go up. Noirtier's room was opened, like all the rest. The first thing he saw was the old man sitting in his arm-chair, in his usual place; but his eyes expressed an internal fright, which was confirmed by the pallor which overspread his features.

"How are you, sir?" asked Morrel, with a sickness of heart.

"Well!" answered the old man, by closing his eyes; but his appearance manifested increasing uneasiness.

"You are thoughtful, sir," continued Morrel; "you want something; shall I call one of the servants?"—"Yes," replied Noirtier.

Morrel pulled the bell, but, though he nearly broke the cord, no one answered. He turned towards Noirtier; the pallor and anguish expressed on his countenance momentarily increased.

"Oh!" exclaimed Morrel, "why do they not come? Is any one ill in the house?" The eyes of Noirtier seemed as though they would start from their sockets. "What is the matter? You alarm me. Valentine? Valentine?"—"Yes, yes," signed Noirtier. Maximilian tried to speak, but he could articulate nothing; he staggered, and supported himself against the wainscot. Then he pointed to the door.

"Yes, yes, yes!" continued the old man. Maximilian rushed up the little staircase, while Noirtier's eyes seemed to say—"Quicker! quicker!"

In a minute the young man darted through several rooms, till, at length,

he reached Valentine's. There was no occasion to push the door, it was wide open. A sob was the only sound he heard. He saw, as though in a mist, a black figure kneeling, and buried in a confused mass of white drapery. A terrible fear transfixed him. It was then he heard a voice exclaim, "Valentine is dead!" and another voice which, like an echo, repeated,—“Dead!—dead!”

CHAPTER CIII.

MAXIMILIAN.

VILLEFORT rose, half ashamed of being surprised in such a paroxysm of grief. The terrible office he had held for twenty-five years had succeeded in making him more or less than man. His glance, at first wandering, fixed itself upon Morrel. "Who are you, sir," he asked, "that forget that this is not the manner to enter a house stricken with death? Go, sir, go!" But Morrel remained motionless; he could not detach his eyes from that disordered bed, and the pale corpse of the young girl who was lying on it. "Go!—do you hear?" said Villefort, while D'Avrigny advanced to lead Morrel out. Maximilian stared for a moment at the corpse, gazed all round the room, then upon the two men; he opened his mouth to speak, but finding it impossible to give utterance to the innumerable ideas that occupied his brain, he went out, thrusting his hands through his hair in such a manner that Villefort and D'Avrigny, for a moment diverted from the engrossing topic, exchanged glances, which seemed to convey,—“He is mad!”

But, in less than five minutes, the staircase groaned beneath an extraordinary weight. Morrel was seen carrying, with superhuman strength, the arm-chair containing Noirtier upstairs. When he reached the landing, he placed the arm-chair on the floor and rapidly rolled it into Valentine's room. This could only have been accomplished by means of unnatural strength supplied by powerful excitement. But the most fearful spectacle was Noirtier being pushed towards the bed, his face expressing all his meaning, and his eyes supplying the want of every other faculty. That pale face and flaming glance appeared to Villefort like a frightful apparition. Each time he had been brought into contact with his father, something terrible had happened. "See what they have done!" cried Morrel, with one hand leaning on the back of the chair, and the other extended towards Valentine. "See, my father, see!"

Villefort drew back and looked with astonishment on the young man, who, almost a stranger to him, called Noirtier his father. At this moment the whole soul of the old man seemed centred in his eyes, which became bloodshot; the veins of the throat swelled; his cheeks and temples became purple, as though he was struck with epilepsy; nothing was wanting to complete this but the utterance of a cry. And the cry issued from his pores, if we may thus speak—a cry, frightful in its silence. D'Avrigny rushed towards the old man and made him inhale a powerful restorative.

"Sir!" cried Morrel, seizing the moist hand of the paralytic. "they ask me who I am, and what right I have to be here? Oh, you know it, tell them, tell them!" And the young man's voice was choked by sobs. As for the old man, his chest heaved with his panting respiration. One could have thought he was undergoing the agonies preceding death. At length, happier than the young man, who sobbed without weeping, tears glistened in the eyes of Noirtier. "Tell them," said Morrel, in a hoarse voice.

"tell them I am her betrothed. Tell them she was my beloved, my noble girl, my only blessing in the world. Tell them—oh! tell them, that corpse belongs to me." The young man who presented the dreadful spectacle of a strong frame crushed, fell heavily on his knees before the bed, which his fingers grasped with convulsive energy. D'Avrigny, unable to bear the sight of this touching emotion, turned away; and Villefort, without seeking any further explanation, and attracted towards him by the irresistible magnetism which draws us towards those who have loved the people for whom we mourn, extended his hand towards the young man. But Morrel saw nothing; he had grasped the hand of Valentine, and, unable to weep, vented his agony in gnawing the sheets. For some time nothing was heard in that chamber but sobs, exclamations, and prayers. At length Villefort, the most composed of all, spoke: "Sir," said he to Maximilian, "you say you loved Valentine, that you were betrothed to her. I knew nothing of this engagement, of this love, yet I, her father, forgive you, for I see your grief is real and deep; and, besides, my own sorrow is too great for anger to find a place in my heart. But you see the angel whom you hoped for has left this earth—she has nothing more to do with the adoration of men. Take a last farewell, sir, of her sad remains; take the hand you expected to possess once more within your own, and then separate yourself from her for ever. Valentine now alone requires the priest who will bless her."

"You are mistaken, sir," exclaimed Morrel, raising himself on one knee, his heart pierced by a more acute pang than any he had yet felt—"you are mistaken; Valentine, dying as she has, not only requires a priest, but an avenger. *You*, M. de Villefort, send for the priest; *I* will be the avenger."—"What do you mean, sir?" asked Villefort, trembling at the new idea inspired by the delirium of Morrel.

"I tell you, sir, that two persons exist in you; the father has mourned sufficiently, now let the procureur du roi fulfil his office."

The eyes of Noirtier glistened, and D'Avrigny approached.

"Gentlemen," said Morrel, reading all that passed through the minds of the witnesses to the scene, "I know what I am saying, and you know as well as I do what I am about to say—Valentine has been assassinated." Villefort hung his head; D'Avrigny approached nearer; and Noirtier expressed "Yes" with his eyes. "Now, sir," continued Morrel, "in these days no one can disappear by violent means without some inquiries being made as to the cause of her disappearance, even were she not a young, beautiful, and adorable creature like Valentine. M. le Procureur du Roi," said Morrel, with increasing vehemence, "no mercy is allowed; I denounce the crime; it is your place to seek the assassin." The young man's implacable eyes interrogated Villefort, who, on his side, glanced from Noirtier to D'Avrigny. But instead of finding sympathy in the eyes of the doctor and his father, he only saw an expression as inflexible as that of Maximilian. "Yes!" indicated the old man.—"Assuredly!" said D'Avrigny.

"Sir," said Villefort, striving to struggle against this triple force and his own emotion,—"*you*, sir, you are deceived, no one commits crimes here. I am stricken by fate. It is horrible, indeed, but no one assassinates."

The eyes of Noirtier lighted up with rage, and D'Avrigny prepared to speak. Morrel, however, extended his arm, and commanded silence. "And I say that murders *are* committed here," said Morrel, whose voice, though lower in tone, lost none of its terrible distinctness. "I tell you, that this is the fourth victim within the last four months. I tell you,

Valentine's life was attempted by poison four days ago, though she escaped, owing to the precautions of M. Noirtier. I tell you that the dose has been doubled, the poison changed, and that this time it has succeeded. I tell you that you know these things as well as I do, since this gentleman has forewarned you, both as a doctor and a friend."

"Oh, you rave, sir!" exclaimed Villefort, in vain endeavouring to escape the net in which he was taken.

"I rave?" said Morrel; "well, then, I appeal to M. d'Avrigny himself. Ask him, sir, if he recollects some words he uttered in the garden of this hotel on the night of Madame de Saint-Méran's death. You thought yourselves alone, and talked about that tragical death, and the fatality you mentioned then is the same as that which has caused the murder of Valentine." Villefort and D'Avrigny exchanged looks. "Yes, yes," continued Morrel; "recall the scene, for the words you thought were only given to silence and solitude fell into my ears. Certainly, after witnessing the culpable indolence manifested by M. de Villefort towards his own relations, I ought to have denounced him to the authorities; then I should not have been an accomplice to thy death, as I now am, sweet, beloved Valentine: but the accomplice shall become the avenger. This fourth murder is apparent to all, and if thy father abandon thee, Valentine, it is I, and I swear it, that shall pursue the assassin." And this time, as though nature had at least taken compassion on the vigorous frame, nearly bursting with its own strength, the words of Morrel were stifled in his throat; his breast heaved; the tears, so long rebellious, gushed from his eyes; and he threw himself, weeping, on his knees, by the side of the bed.

Then D'Avrigny spoke. "And I, too," he exclaimed, in a low voice, "I unite with M. Morrel in demanding justice for crime; my blood boils at the idea of having encouraged a murderer by my cowardly concession."—"Oh! merciful Heavens!" murmured Villefort. Morrel raised his head, and reading the eyes of the old man, which gleamed with unnatural lustre,—“Stay,” he said, “M. Noirtier wishes to speak.”—"Yes," indicated Noirtier, with an expression the more terrible, from all his faculties being centred in his glance.

"Do you know the assassin?" asked Morrel.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.—“And will you direct us?” exclaimed the young man. "Listen, M. d'Avrigny! listen!" Noirtier looked upon Morrel with one of those melancholy smiles which had so often made Valentine happy, and thus fixed his attention. Then, having riveted the eyes of his interlocutor on his own, he glanced towards the door.

"Do you wish me to leave?" said Morrel, sadly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier.—“Alas! alas! sir, have pity on me!”

The old man's eyes remained fixed on the door.

"May I, at least, return?" asked Morrel.—“Yes.”

"Must I leave alone?"—"No."—"Who am I to take with me?"—"M. le Procureur du Roi?"—"No."—"The doctor?"—"Yes."

"You wish to remain alone with M. Villefort?"—"Yes."

"But can he understand you?"—"Yes."

"Oh!" said Villefort, inexpressibly delighted to think the inquiries were to be made *tête-à-tête*,—"oh, be satisfied, I can understand my father." D'Avrigny took the young man's arm, and led him out of the room. A more than deathlike silence then reigned in the house. At the end of a quarter of an hour a faltering footstep was heard, and Villefort appeared at the door of the apartment where D'Avrigny and Morrel had been stay-

continued with
"But," said Morrel, "the culprit—"
"Do not alarm yourself, sir, justice
father has revealed the culprit's name
much as you do, yet even he conjures
Do you not, father?"—"Yes," res
suffered an exclamation of horror and s
said Villefort, arresting Maximilian b
flexible man, makes this request, it is t
Valentine will be terribly avenged. Is
made a sign in the affirmative. Villefo
I have pledged my word to him. Re
three days, in a less time than justice v
have taken for the murder of my child v
heart tremble ;" and as he spoke these
grasped the old man's senseless hand.

"Will this promise be fulfilled, M.
D'Avrigny looked inquiringly.

"Yes," replied Noirtier, with an expre

"Swear, then," said Villefort, joining th
"swear that you will spare the honour of
my child." D'Avrigny turned round at
but Morrel, disengaging his hand, rush
pressed the cold lips of Valentine with
long, deep groan of despair and anguish.
the servants had fled. M. de Villefort
M. d'Avrigny to superintend all those a
death in a large city, more especially a
cumstances. It was something terrible
mute despair of Noirtier, whose tears
Villefort retired to his study and

panion was dipping the fingers with which he had touched the lips of the corpse in chloride of lime, he uncovered that calm and pale face, which looked like that of a sleeping angel. A tear, which appeared in the old man's eye expressed his thanks to the doctor. The doctor of the dead then laid his *procès-verbal* on the corner of the table, and, having executed his office, was conducted out by D'Avrigny. Villefort met them at the door of his study: having in a few words thanked the district doctor, he returned to D'Avrigny, and said,—

"And now the priest."

"Is there any particular priest you wish to pray with Valentine?" asked D'Avrigny.—"No," said Villefort; "fetch the nearest."

"The nearest," said the district doctor, "is a good Italian abbé, who lives next door to you. Shall I call on him as I pass?"

"D'Avrigny," said Villefort, "be so kind, I beseech you, as to accompany this gentleman. Here is the key of the door, so that you can go in and out as you please: you will bring the priest with you, and will oblige me by introducing him into my child's room."

"Do you wish to see him?"—"I only wish to be alone. You will excuse me, will you not? A priest can understand a father's grief." And M. de Villefort, giving the key to D'Avrigny, again bade farewell to the strange doctor, and retired to his study, where he began to work. For some temperaments work is a remedy for all afflictions. As the doctors entered the street, they saw a man in a cassock standing on the threshold of the next door. "This is the abbé of whom I spoke," said the doctor to D'Avrigny. D'Avrigny accosted the priest. "Sir," he said, "are you disposed to confer a great obligation on an unhappy father who has just lost his daughter? I mean M. de Villefort, the *procureur du roi*."—"Ah!" said the priest, in a marked Italian accent; "yes, I have heard that death is in that house."

"Then I need not tell you what kind of service he requires of you."

"I was about to offer myself, sir," said the priest; "it is our mission to forestall our duties."—"It is a young girl."

"I know it, sir; the servants who fled from the house informed me. I also know that her name is Valentine, and I have already prayed for her."—"Thank you, sir," said D'Avrigny; "since you have commenced your sacred office, deign to continue it. Come and watch by the dead, and all the wretched family will be grateful to you."

"I am going, sir; and I do not hesitate to say that no prayers will be more fervent than mine." D'Avrigny took the priest's hand, and without meeting Villefort, who was engaged in his study, they reached Valentine's room, which on the following night was to be occupied by the undertakers. On entering the room, Noirtier's eyes met those of the abbé, and no doubt he read some particular expression in them, for he remained in the room. D'Avrigny recommended the attention of the priest to the living as well as to the dead, and the abbé promised to devote his prayers to Valentine and his attentions to Noirtier. In order, doubtless, that he might not be disturbed while fulfilling his sacred mission, the priest, as soon as D'Avrigny departed, rose, and not only bolted the door through which the doctor had just left, but also that leading to Madame de Villefort's room.

CHAPTER CIV.

DANGLARS' SIGNATURE.

THE next morning rose sad and cloudy. During the night the undertakers had executed their melancholy office, and folded the corpse in the winding-sheet, which, whatever may be said about the equality of death, is at least a last proof of the luxury so pleasing in life. This winding-sheet was nothing more than a beautiful piece of cambric, which the young girl had bought a fortnight before. During the evening two men, engaged for the purpose, had carried Noirtier from Valentine's room into his own, and, contrary to all expectation, there was no difficulty in withdrawing him from his child. The Abbé Busoni had watched till daylight, and then left without calling any one. D'Avrigny returned about eight o'clock in the morning; he met Villefort on his way to Noirtier's room, and accompanied him to see how the old man had slept. They found him in the large arm-chair, which served him for a bed, enjoying a calm, nay, almost a smiling sleep. They both stood in amazement at the door.

"See," said D'Avrigny to Villefort, "nature knows how to alleviate the deepest sorrow. No one can say M. Noirtier did not love his child, and yet he sleeps."—"Yes, you are right," replied Villefort, surprised: "he sleeps, indeed! And this is the more strange, since the least contradiction keeps him awake all night."

"Grief has stunned him," replied D'Avrigny; and they both returned thoughtfully to the study of the procureur du roi.—"See, I have not slept," said Villefort, showing his undisturbed bed; "grief does not stun me. I have not been in bed for two nights; but then look at my desk; see what I have written during these two days and nights. I have filled those papers, and have made out the accusation against the assassin Benedetto. Oh, work! work! my passion, my joy, my delight! it is for thee to alleviate my sorrows!" and he convulsively grasped the hand of D'Avrigny.

"Do you require my services now?" asked D'Avrigny.

"No," said Villefort; "only return again at eleven o'clock; at twelve the—the—oh, Heavens! my poor, poor child!" and the procureur du roi, again becoming a man, lifted up his eyes and groaned.

"Shall you be present in the reception room?"—"No: I have a cousin who has undertaken this sad office. I shall work, doctor—when I work I forget everything." And, indeed, no sooner had the doctor left the room, than he was again absorbed in study. On the doorsteps D'Avrigny met the cousin whom Villefort had mentioned, a personage as insignificant in our story as in the world he occupied—one of those beings devoted from their birth to make themselves useful to others. He was punctual, dressed in black, with a crape round his hat, and presented himself at his cousin's with a face made up for the occasion, and which he could alter as might be required. At twelve o'clock the mourning-coaches rolled into the paved court, and the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré was filled with a crowd of idlers, equally pleased to witness the festivities or the mourning of the rich, and who rush with the same avidity to a funeral procession as to the marriage of a duchess. Gradually the reception-room filled, and some of our old friends made their appearance—we mean Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp, accompanied by all the leading men of the day at the bar, in literature, or the army, for M. de Villefort moved in the first Parisian circles, less owing to his social position than to his personal merit. The cousin standing at the door ushered in the guests, and it was

rather a relief to the indifferent to see a person as unmoved as themselves, and who did not exact a mournful face or forced tears, as would have been the case with a father, a brother, or a lover. Those who were acquainted soon formed into little groups. One of those was composed of Debray, Château-Renaud, and Beauchamp.

"Poor girl!" said Debray, like the rest, paying an involuntary tribute to the sad event,— "poor girl! so young! so rich! so beautiful! Could you have imagined this scene, Château-Renaud, when we saw her, at the most three weeks ago, about to sign that contract?"

"Indeed, no!" said Château-Renaud.

"Did you know her?"—"I spoke to her once or twice at Madame de Morcerf's, amongst the rest; she appeared to me charming, though rather melancholy. Where is her step-mother? Do you know?"

"She is spending the day with the wife of the worthy gentleman who is receiving us."—"Who is he?"—"Whom do you mean?"

"The gentleman who receives us? Is he a deputy?"

"Oh, no. I am condemned to witness those gentlemen every day," said Beauchamp; "but he is perfectly unknown to me."

"Have you mentioned this death in your paper?"

"It has been mentioned; but the article is not mine; indeed, I doubt if it will please M. Villefort, for it says, that if four successive deaths had happened anywhere else than in the house of the procureur du roi, he would have interested himself somewhat more about it."

"Still," said Château-Renaud, "Dr. d'Avrigny, who attends my mother, declares he is in despair about it. But whom are you seeking, Debray?"

"I am seeking the count of Monte-Cristo," said the young man.

"I met him on the Boulevard, on my road here," said Beauchamp. "I think he is about to leave Paris; he was going to his banker."

"His banker? Danglars is his banker, is he not?" asked Château-Renaud of Debray.

"I believe so," replied the secretary, with slight uneasiness. "But Monte-Cristo is not the only one I miss here; I do not see Morrel."

"Morrel! Do they know him?" asked Château-Renaud. "I think he had only been introduced to Madame de Villefort."

"Still, he ought to have been here," said Debray; "I wonder what will be talked about to-night; this funeral is the news of the day. But hush! here comes our minister of justice; he will feel obliged to make some little speech to the cousin," and the three young men drew near to listen. Beauchamp told the truth when he said, that on his road to the funeral he had met Monte-Cristo, who was directing his steps towards the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, to M. Danglars'. The banker saw the carriage of the count enter the court-yard, and advanced to meet him with a sad, though affable smile. "Well!" said he, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo, "I suppose you have come to sympathise with me, for indeed misfortune has taken possession of my house. When I perceived you, I was just asking myself whether I had not wished harm towards those poor Morcerfs, which would have justified the proverb of 'He who wishes misfortunes to happen to others experiences them himself.' Well! on my word of honour, I answered, 'No!' I wished no ill to Morcerf; he was a little proud, perhaps, for a man who, like myself, had risen from nothing; but we all have our faults. Do you know, count, that persons of our time of life—not that you belong to the class, you are still a young man, but, as I was saying, persons of our time of life—have been very unfortunate this year. For example, look at the puritanical procureur du roi, who has just lost

"And yet they say orphans prolong the jest. "Poor th M. de Boville ; "but did you

"Yes."—"I have brought

"My dear M. Boville, your v ing twenty-four hours, since leaving here—you did see him

"Well, M. de Monte-Cristo

"How so?"—"The count opened by Thomson and Fr millions at once, which I paid are deposited there ; and you c on the same day, it will appear will be a different thing," said

"Come," said Boville, with : to that gentleman who just knew me !"—"Perhaps he k M. de Monte-Cristo knows eve

"Five millions !"—"Here de Boville took the paper Dang

"Received of Baron Dangl thousand francs ; which will be of Thomson and French of Ro

"It is really true," said De B

"Do you know the house of had business to transact with it then I have not heard it ment Europe," said Danglars, careless

"And he had five millions Monte-Cristo must be a nabob he has three unlimited credits-- and, you see," he added, carele



"Well, I must confess, these are scruples."

"I registered their deed of gift yesterday."

"And how much did they possess?"—"Oh! not much! from twelve to thirteen hundred thousand francs. But to return to our millions."

"Certainly," said Danglars, in the most natural tone in the world.

"Are you, then, pressed for this money?"—"Yes; for the examination of our cash takes place to-morrow."

"To-morrow!—Why did you not tell me so before? Why, it is as good as a century! At what hour does the examination take place?"

"At two o'clock."

"Send at twelve," said Danglars, smiling. M. de Boville said nothing, but nodded his head, and took up the portfolio. "Now I think of it, you can do better," said Danglars.

"How do you mean?"

"The receipt of M. de Monte-Cristo is as good as money; take it to Rothschild's or Lafitte's, and they will take it of you directly."

"What, though payable at Rome?"—"Certainly; it will only cost you a discount of 5,000 or 6,000 francs." The receiver started back. "*Ma foi!*" he said, "I prefer waiting till to-morrow. What a proposition!"

"I thought, perhaps," said Danglars, with supreme impertinence, "that you had a deficiency to make up?"

"Indeed," said the receiver.—"And if that were the case it would be worth while to make some sacrifice."

"Thank you; no, sir."—"Then it will be to-morrow."

"Yes; but without fail."—"Ah! you are laughing at me: send to-morrow at twelve, and the bank shall be informed."

"I will come myself."—"Better still, since it will afford me the pleasure of seeing you." They shook hands. "By the way," said M. de Boville, "are you not going to the funeral of poor Mademoiselle de Villefort, which I met on my road here?"—"No," said the banker; "I have appeared rather ridiculous since that affair of Benedetto, so I remain in the background."

"Bah! you are wrong. How were you to blame in that affair?"

"Listen!—When one bears an irreproachable name, as I do, one is rather sensitive."

"Everybody pities you, sir; and, above all, Mademoiselle Danglars!"

"Poor Eugénie!" said Danglars; "do you know she is going to embrace a religious life?"—"No."—"Alas! it is unhappily but too true. The day after the event, she decided on leaving Paris with a nun of her acquaintance: they are gone to seek a very strict convent in Italy or Spain."—"Oh! it is terrible!" and M. de Boville retired with this exclamation, after expressing acute sympathy with the father. But he had scarcely left before Danglars, with an energy of action those can alone understand who have seen Robert Macaire represented by Frédéric, exclaimed,—"*Fool!*!" Then, enclosing Monte-Cristo's receipt in a little pocket-book, he added:—"Yes, come at twelve o'clock; I shall then be far away." Then he double-locked his door; emptied all his drawers, collected about fifty-thousand francs in bank-notes, burned several papers, left others exposed to view, and then commenced writing a letter which he addressed:—"To Madame la Baronne Danglars."

"I will place it on her table myself to-night," he murmured. Then taking a passport from his drawer he said,—"*Good, it is available for two months longer.*"

conducting from the ground-floor to M
the landing he listened attentively, l
houses occupied by a single family, the
But it was locked, Maximilian was shut
what was passing in the room, owing
before the glass. The count's anxiety
which seldom appeared on the face of t

"What shall I do?" he uttered, and
ring? No, the sound of a bell, announ
the resolution of one in Maximilian's sit
followed by a louder noise." Monte-Cris
as if his determination had been taken
struck one of the panes of glass with his
atoms, then withdrawing the curtain, he
at his desk, bound from his seat at the

"I beg a thousand pardons!" said
matter, but I slipped down and broke my
elbow. Since it is open, I will take adv.
do not disturb yourself—do not disturb y
through the broken glass, the count open
discomposed, came to meet Monte-Cristo
ceiving him than to exclude his entry.
rubbing his elbow, "it's all your servant's
it is like walking on glass."—"Are you

"I believe not. But what are you abo

"I?"—"Your fingers are stained wit

"Ah, true, I was writing. I do somet

Monte-Cristo advanced into the room
him pass, but he followed him. "You w
with a searching look.

"I have a letter to write."

have been actuated by real uneasiness, or rather by a terrible conviction. Morrel, you are going to destroy yourself!"

"Indeed, count!" said Morrel, shuddering; "what has put this into your head?"—"I tell you that you are about to destroy yourself," continued the count, "and here is the proof of what I say;" and, approaching the desk, he removed the sheet of paper which Morrel had placed over the letter he had begun, and took the latter in his hands.

Morrel rushed forward to tear it from him; but Monte-Cristo, perceiving his intention, seized his wrist with his iron grasp. "You wish to destroy yourself," said the count; "you have written it."—"Well!" said Morrel, changing his expression of calmness for one of violence—"well, and if I do intend to turn this pistol against myself, who shall prevent me—who will dare prevent me? All my hopes are blighted, my heart is broken, my life a burden, everything around me is sad and mournful; earth has become distasteful to me, and human voices distract me. It is a mercy to let me die, for if I live I shall lose my reason and become mad. When, sir, I tell you all this with tears of heartfelt anguish, can you reply that I am wrong, can you prevent my putting an end to my miserable existence? Tell me, sir, could you have the courage to do so?"

"Yes, Morrel," said Monte-Cristo, with a calmness which contrasted strangely with the young man's excitement; "yes, I would do so."

"You!" exclaimed Morrel, with increasing anger and reproach—"you, who have deceived me with false hopes, who have cheered and soothed me with vain promises, when I might, if not have saved her, at least have seen her die in my arms! you, who pretend to understand everything, even the hidden sources of knowledge! you, who enact the part of a guardian angel upon earth, and could not even find an antidote to a poison administered to a young girl! Ah, sir, indeed you would inspire me with pity, were you not hateful in my eyes."—"Morrel!"

"Yes; you tell me to lay aside the mask, and I will do so, be satisfied! When you spoke to me at the cemetery, I answered you—my heart was softened; when you arrived here, I allowed you to enter. But since you abuse my confidence, since you have devised a new torture after I thought I had exhausted them all, then, Count of Monte-Cristo, my pretended benefactor—then, Count of Monte-Cristo, the universal guardian, be satisfied, you shall witness the death of your friend;" and Morrel, with a maniacal laugh, again rushed towards the pistols.—"And I again repeat, you shall not commit suicide."

"Prevent me, then!" replied Morrel, with another struggle, which, like the first, failed in releasing him from the count's iron grasp.

"I will prevent you."—"And who are you, then, that arrogate to yourself this tyrannical right over free and rational beings?"

"Who am I?" repeated Monte-Cristo. "Listen; I am the only man in the world having the right to say to you, 'Morrel, your father's son shall not die to-day,'" and Monte-Cristo, with an expression of majesty and sublimity, advanced, with his arms folded, towards the young man, who, involuntarily overcome by the command of this man, recoiled a step.

"Why do you mention my father?" stammered he; "why do you mingle a recollection of him with the affairs of to-day?"—"Because I am he who saved your father's life when he wished to destroy himself, as you do to-day—because I am the man who sent the purse to your young sister, and the *Pharaon* to old Morrel—because I am the Edmond Dantès who nursed you, a child, on my knees." Morrel made another step back, staggering, breathless, crushed; then all his strength gave way, and he fell

is——”

He would have added “Edmond and prevented him. Julie threw her arms round Emmanuel and embraced him as a guardian angel; she struck the ground with her forehead; her heart swelled in her breast; a flash of light gleamed from her eyes; she bent her head and wept. The room but a succession of sobs and hearts mounted to heaven. Julie’s emotion when she rushed out of the room, she ran into the drawing-room with which she was covered the purse given by the Countess. Meanwhile, Emmanuel, in a broken voice, said, “How could you, hearing us so often say that we pay such homage of gratitude and love, you continue so long without discovering to us, and—dare I say it?—to you to count—” “I may call you so, since it is eleven years: the discovery of this event which you must never know. I am in my own bosom, but your brother’s violence he repents of now, I am sure. That Morrel, still on his knees, had added in a low voice, pressing Emmanuel over him.”——“Why so?” asked the Countess.

“I cannot explain myself; but I went round the room, and caught sight of the arms, and he pointed to them. Morrel went towards the pistols. “Leave them,” saying towards Morrel, he took his hand. The young man was succeeded by a prodigious woman in her hands the silken purse, while she like dewdrops on the rose.

eyes on Morrel, and remarked that the words, "I shall have left this country," had failed to rouse him from his lethargy. He then saw that he must make another struggle against the grief of his friend, and, taking the hands of Emmanuel and Julie, which he pressed within his own, he said, with the mild authority of a father, "My kind friends, leave me alone with Maximilian." Julie saw the means offered of carrying off her precious relic, which Monte-Cristo had forgotten. She drew her husband to the door. "Let us leave them," she said.

The count was alone with Morrel, who remained motionless as a statue.

"Come," said Monte-Cristo, touching his shoulder with his finger, are you a man again, Maximilian?"—"Yes; for I begin to suffer again."

The count frowned, apparently in gloomy hesitation.

"Maximilian, Maximilian," he said, "the ideas you yield to are unworthy of a Christian."

"O, do not fear, my friend," said Morrel, raising his head, and smiling with a sweet expression on the count; "I shall no longer attempt my life."

"Then we are to have no more pistols—no more arms?"

"No; I have found a better remedy for my grief than either a bullet or knife."—"Poor fellow! what is it?"

"My grief will kill me of itself."—"My friend," said Monte-Cristo, with an expression of melancholy equal to his own, "listen to me: one day, in a moment of despair like yours, since it led to a similar resolution, I, like you, wished to kill myself; one day your father, equally desperate, wished to kill himself too. If any one had said to your father, at the moment he raised the pistol to his head—if any one had told me, when in my prison I pushed back the food I had not tasted for three days—if any one had said to either of us then, 'Live! the day will come when you will be happy, and will bless life!'—no matter whose voice had spoken, we should have heard him with the smile of doubt, or the anguish of incredulity; and yet how many times has your father blessed life while embracing you! how often have I myself——"

"Ah!" exclaimed Morrel, interrupting the count, "you had only lost your liberty, my father had only lost his fortune, but I have lost Valentine."

"Look at me," said Monte-Cristo, with that expression which sometimes made him so eloquent and persuasive—"look at me: there are no tears in my eyes, nor is there fever in my veins, yet I see you suffer—you, Maximilian, whom I love as my own son. Well, does not this tell you that in grief, as in life, there is always something to look forward to beyond? Now, if I entreat, if I order you to live, Morrel, it is in the conviction that one day you will thank me for having preserved your life."

"Oh, Heavens!" said the young man, "oh, Heavens! what are you saying, count? Take care. But perhaps you have never loved!"

"Child!" replied the count.

"I mean, as I love. You see, I have been a soldier ever since I attained manhood; I reached the age of twenty-nine without loving, for none of the feelings I before then experienced merit the appellation of love; well, at twenty-nine I saw Valentine; during two years I have loved her, during two years I have seen written in her heart, as in a book, all the virtues of a daughter and wife. Count, to possess Valentine would have been a happiness too infinite, too ecstatic, too complete, too divine for this world, since it has been denied me; but without Valentine the earth is desolate."

"I have told you to hope," said the count.

"Then have a care, I repeat, for you seek to persuade me, and if you succeed I should lose my reason, for I should hope that I could again be

hold Valentine." The count smiled. "My friend, my father," said Morrel, with excitement, "have a care, I again repeat, for the power you wield over me alarms me. Weigh your words before you speak, for my eyes have already become brighter, and my heart rebounds; be cautious, or you will make me believe in supernatural agencies. I must obey you, so in mercy be cautious."—"Hope, my friend," repeated the count.

"Ah," said Morrel, falling from the height of excitement to the abyss of despair—"ah, you are playing with me, like those good, or, rather, selfish mothers who soothe their children with honied words, because their screams annoy them. No, my friend, I was wrong to caution you; do not fear, I will bury my grief so deep in my heart, I will disguise it so, that you shall not even care to sympathise with me. Adieu, my friend, adieu!"—"On the contrary," said the count, "after this time you must live with me—you must not leave me; and in a week we shall have left France behind us."

"And you still bid me hope?"

"I tell you to hope, because I have a method of curing you."

"Count, you render me sadder than before, if it be possible. You think the result of this blow has been to produce an ordinary grief, and you would cure it by an ordinary remedy—change of scene." And Morrel dropped his head with disdainful incredulity. "What can I say more?" asked Monte-Cristo. "I have confidence in the remedy I propose, and only ask you to permit me to assure you of its efficacy."

"Count, you prolong my agony."—"Then," said the count, "your feeble spirit will not even grant me the trial I request? Come! do you know of what the Count of Monte-Cristo is capable? do you know that he holds terrestrial beings under his control? nay, that he can almost work a miracle! Well, wait for the miracle I hope to accomplish, or——"

"Or?" repeated Morrel.—"Or, take care, Morrel, lest I call you ungrateful."—"Have pity on me, count!"

"I feel so much pity towards you, Maximilian, that—listen to me attentively—if I do not cure you in a month, to the day, to the very hour, mark my words, Morrel, I will place loaded pistols before you, and a cup full of the deadliest Italian poison—a poison more sure and prompt than that which has killed Valentine."—"Will you promise me?"

"Yes; for I am a man, and have suffered like yourself, and also contemplated suicide; indeed, often since misfortune has left me, I have longed for the delights of an eternal sleep."—"But you are sure you will promise me this?" said Morrel, intoxicated. "I not only promise, but swear it!" said Monte-Cristo, extending his hand.

"In a month, then, on your honour, if I am not consoled, you will let me take my life into my own hands, and, whatever may happen, you will not call me ungrateful?"—"In a month, to the day; the very hour and the date is a sacred one, Maximilian. I do not know whether you remember that this is the 5th of September; it is ten years to-day since I saved your father's life, who wished to die." Morrel seized the count's hand and kissed it; the count allowed him to pay the homage he felt due to him. "In a month you will find on the table, at which we shall be then sitting, good pistols and a delicious draught; but, on the other hand, you must promise me not to attempt your life before that time."

"Oh! I also swear it." Monte-Cristo drew the young man towards him, and pressed him for some time to his heart. "And now," he said, "after to-day, you will come and live with me; you can occupy Haydée's apartment, and my daughter will at least be replaced by my son."

"Haydée?" said Morrel, "what has become of her?"

"She departed last night."—"To leave you?"

"To wait for me. Hold yourself ready then to join me at the Champs Elysées, and lead me out of this house without any one seeing my departure." Maximilian hung his head, and obeyed with childlike reverence.

CHAPTER CVI.

THE DIVISION.

THE first floor of the house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, chosen by Albert and Madame de Morcerf for their residence, consisting of one room, was let to a very mysterious person. This was a man whose face the concierge himself had never seen; for in the winter his chin was buried in one of those large red handkerchiefs worn by gentlemen's coachmen on a cold night, and in the summer he made a point of always blowing his nose just as he approached the door. Contrary to custom, this gentleman had not been watched, for as the report ran that he was a person of high rank, and one who would allow no impertinent interference, his incognito was strictly respected. His visits were tolerably regular, though occasionally he appeared a little before or after his time, but generally, both in summer and winter, he took possession of his apartment about four o'clock, though he never spent the night there. At half-past three in the winter the fire was lighted by the discreet servant, who had the superintendence of the little apartment; and in the summer ices were placed on the table at the same hour. At four o'clock, as we have already stated, the mysterious personage arrived. Twenty minutes afterwards a carriage stopped at the house, a lady alighted in a black or dark-blue dress, and always thickly veiled; she passed like a shadow through the lodge, and ran upstairs without a sound escaping under the touch of her light foot. No one ever asked her where she was going. Her face, therefore, like that of the gentleman, was perfectly unknown to the two concierges, who were, perhaps, unequalled throughout the capital for discretion. We need not say she stopped at the first floor. Then she tapped at a door in a peculiar manner, which, after being opened to admit her, was again fastened, and all was done. The same precautions were used in leaving as on entering the house. The lady always left first; and stepping into her carriage, it drove away, sometimes towards the right hand, sometimes the left; then, about twenty minutes afterwards, the gentleman would also leave, buried in his cravat or concealed by his handkerchief.

The day after Monte-Cristo had called upon Danglars, the mysterious lodger entered at ten o'clock in the morning instead of four in the afternoon. Almost directly afterwards, without the usual interval of time, a hackney-coach arrived, and the veiled lady ran hastily upstairs. The door opened, but before it could be closed, the lady exclaimed: "Oh, Lucien! oh, my friend!" The concierge, therefore, heard for the first time that the lodger's name was Lucien; still, as he was the very perfection of a door-keeper, he made up his mind not to tell his wife. "Well, what is the matter, my dear?" asked the gentleman whose name the lady's agitation revealed; "tell me what is the matter."—"Oh, Lucien! can I confide in you?"

"Of course, you know you can do so. But what can be the matter? Your note of this morning has completely bewildered me. This precipitation—this disordered meeting.—Come, ease me of my anxiety, or else"

frighten me at once."—"Lucien ! a great event has happened !" said the lady, glancing inquiringly at Lucien,—*"M. Danglars left last night !"*

"Left !—M. Danglars left ! Where is he gone to ?"

"I do not know."

"What do you mean ? Is he gone intending not to return ?"

"Undoubtedly : at ten o'clock at night his horses took him to the barrier of Charenton ; there a post-chaise was waiting for him—he entered it with his valet-de-chambre, saying that he was going to Fontainebleau."

"Then what did you mean——"

"Stay !—he left a letter for me."—"A letter ?"

"Yes ; read it." And the baroness took from her pocket a letter which she gave to Debray. Debray paused a moment before reading, as if trying to guess its contents, or, perhaps, while making up his mind how to act, whatever it might contain. No doubt his ideas were arranged in a few minutes, for he began reading the letter which caused so much uneasiness in the heart of the baroness, and which ran as follows :

"Madame and most faithful wife."

Debray mechanically stopped and looked at the baroness, whose face became covered with blushes. *"Read,"* she said.

Debray continued :

"When you receive this, you will no longer have a husband ! Oh ! you need not be alarmed, you will only have lost him as you have lost your daughter ; I mean that I shall be travelling on one of the thirty or forty roads leading out of France. I owe you some explanations for my conduct, and as you are a woman that can perfectly understand me, I will give them. Listen, then : I this morning received five millions, which I paid away ; almost directly afterwards another demand for the same sum was presented to me ; I postponed this creditor till to-morrow, and I intend leaving to-day, to escape that to-morrow, which would be rather too unpleasant for me to endure. You understand this, do you not, my most precious wife ? I say you understand this, because you are as conversant with my affairs as I am ; indeed, I think you understand them better, since I am ignorant of what has become of a considerable portion of my fortune, once very tolerable, while I am sure, madame, that you are perfectly acquainted with it. For women have infallible instincts ; they can even explain the marvellous by an algebraic calculation they have invented ; but I, who only understand my own figures, know nothing more than that one day these figures deceived me. Have you admired the rapidity of my fall ? Have you been slightly dazzled at the sudden fusion of my ingots ? I confess I have seen nothing but the fire ; let us hope you have found some gold amongst the ashes. With this consoling idea, I leave you, madame, and most prudent wife, without any conscientious reproach for abandoning you ; you have friends left, and the ashes I have already mentioned, and, above all, the liberty I hasten to restore to you. And here, madame, I must add another word of explanation. So long as I hoped you were working for the good of our house and for the fortune of our daughter, I philosophically closed my eyes ; but as you have transformed that house into a vast ruin, I will not be the foundation of another man's fortune. You were rich when I married you, but little respected. Excuse me for speaking so very candidly ; but as this is intended only for ourselves, I do not see why I should weigh my words. I have augmented our fortune, and it has continued to increase during the last fifteen years,

till extraordinary and unexpected catastrophes have suddenly overturned it, without any fault of mine, I can honestly declare. You, madame, have only sought to increase your own, and I am convinced you have succeeded. I leave you, therefore, as I took you, rich, but little respected. Adieu ! I also intend from this time to work on my own account. Accept my acknowledgments for the example you have set me, and which I intend following.

"Your very devoted husband,
"BARON DANGLARS."

The baroness had watched Debray while reading this long and painful letter, and saw him, notwithstanding his self-control, change colour once or twice. When he had ended the perusal, he folded the letter, and resumed his pensive attitude. "Well?" asked Madame Danglars, with an anxiety easy to be understood.

"Well, madame?" unhesitatingly repeated Debray.

"With what ideas does that letter inspire you?"

"Oh, it is simple enough, madame; it inspires me with the idea that M. Danglars has left suspiciously."

"Certainly; but is this all you have to say to me?"

"I do not understand you," said Debray, with freezing coldness.

"He is gone! Gone, never to return!"

"Oh, madame! do not think that!"—"I tell you he will never return; I know his character; he is inflexible in any resolutions formed for his own interests. If he could have made any use of me, he would have taken me with him: he leaves me in Paris, as our separation will conduce to his benefit; therefore he has gone, and I am free for ever," added Madame Danglars, in the same supplicating tone. Debray, instead of answering, allowed her to remain in an attitude of nervous inquiry.

"Well?" she said at length, "do you not answer me?"

"I have but one question to ask you,—what do you intend to do?"

"I was going to ask you," replied the baroness with a beating heart.

"Ah! then, you wish to ask advice of me?"

"Yes; I do wish to ask your advice," said Madame Danglars, with anxious expectation.—"Then if you wish to take my advice," said the young man, coldly, "I would recommend you to travel."

"To travel!" she murmured.—"Certainly; as M. Danglars says, you are rich, and perfectly free. In my opinion, a withdrawal from Paris is absolutely necessary after the double catastrophe of Mademoiselle Danglars' broken contract and M. Danglars' disappearance. The world will think you abandoned and poor; for the wife of a bankrupt would never be forgiven, were she to keep up the appearance of opulence. You have only to remain in Paris for about a fortnight, telling the world you are abandoned, and relating the details of this desertion to your best friends, who will soon spread the report. Then you can quit your house, leaving your jewels, and giving up your jointure, and every one's mouth will be filled with praises of your disinterestedness. They will know you are deserted, and think you also poor; for I alone know your real financial position, and am quite ready to give up my accounts as an honest partner." The dread with which the baroness, pale and motionless, listened to this, was equalled by the calm indifference with which Debray had spoken. "Deserted!" she repeated; "ah, yes, I am, indeed, deserted! You are right, sir, and no one can doubt my position." These were the only words uttered by the proud and violent woman.

"But then you are rich,—very rich indeed," continued Debray, taking out some papers from his pocket-book, which he spread upon the table. Madame Danglars saw them not; she was fully engaged in stilling the beatings of her heart, and restraining the tears which were ready to gush forth. At length a sense of dignity prevailed, and if she did not entirely master her agitation, she at least succeeded in preventing the fall of a single tear. "Madame," said Debray, "it is nearly six months since we have been associated. You furnished a principal of 100,000 francs. Our partnership began in the month of April. In May we commenced operations, and in the course of the month gained 450,000 francs. In June the profit amounted to 900,000. In July we added 1,700,000 francs: it was, you know, the month of the Spanish bonds. In August we lost 300,000 francs at the beginning of the month, but on the 13th we made up for it, and we now find that our accounts, reckoning from the first day of partnership up to yesterday, when I closed them, showed a capital of 2,400,000 francs, that is, 1,200,000 for each of us. Now, madame," said Debray, delivering up his accounts in the methodical manner of a stockbroker, "there are still 80,000 francs, the interest of this money, in my hands."

"But," said the baroness, "I thought you never put the money out to interest."—"Excuse me, madame," said Debray, coldly, "I had your permission to do so, and I have made use of it. There are, then, 40,000 francs for your share, besides the 100,000 you furnished me to begin with, making, in all, 1,340,000 francs for your portion. Now, madame, I took the precaution of drawing out your money the day before yesterday: it is not long ago, you see, and I might be suspected of continually expecting to be called on to deliver up my accounts. There is your money, half in bank-notes, the other half in cheques payable to the bearer. I say *there*, for as I did not consider my house safe enough, nor lawyers sufficiently discreet, and as landed property carries evidence with it, and, moreover, since you have no right to possess anything independent of your husband, I have kept this sum, now your whole fortune, in a chest concealed under that closet, and, for greater security, I myself fastened it in. Now, madame," continued Debray, first opening the closet, then the chest,— "now, madame, here are 800 notes of 1,000 francs each, resembling, as you see, a large book bound in iron; to this I add a dividend of 25,000 francs; then, for the odd cash, making, I think, about 110,000 francs, here is a cheque upon my banker, who, not being M. Danglars, will pay you the amount, you may rest assured." Madame Danglars mechanically took the cheque, the dividend, and the heap of bank-notes. This enormous fortune made no great appearance on the table. Madame Danglars, with tearless eyes, but with her breast heaving with concealed emotion, placed the bank-notes in her bag, put the dividend and cheque into her pocket-book, and then, standing pale and mute, awaited one kind word of consolation. But she waited in vain.

"Now, madame," said Debray, "you have a splendid fortune, an income of about 60,000 livres a year, which is enormous for a woman who cannot keep an establishment here for a year, at least. You will be able to indulge all your fancies; besides, should you find your income insufficient, you can, for the sake of the past, madame, make use of mine; and I am ready to offer you all I possess, on loan."

"Thank you, sir—thank you," replied the baroness; "you forget that what you have just paid me is much more than a poor woman requires, who intends for some time, at least, to retire from the world."

Debray was, for a moment, surprised, but immediately recovering himself, he bowed with an air which seemed to convey—

"As you please, madame."

Madame Danglars had, until then, perhaps, hoped for something ; but when she saw the careless brow of Debray, and the glance by which it was accompanied, together with his significant silence, she raised her head, and, without passion, or violence, or even hesitation, ran downstairs, disdaining to address a last farewell to one who could thus part from her. "Bah !" said Debray, when she had left, "these are fine projects ! she will remain at home, read novels, and speculate at cards, since she can no longer do so on the Bourse." Then, taking up his account-book, he cancelled, with the greatest care, all the amounts he had just paid away. "I have a million and 60,000 francs remaining," he said. "What a pity Mademoiselle de Villefort is dead ! She suited me in every respect, and I would have married her." And he calmly waited till the twenty minutes had elapsed after Madame Danglars' departure before he left the house. During this time he occupied himself in making figures, with his watch by his side.

Asmodeus—that diabolical personage, who would have been created by every fertile imagination, if Le Sage had not acquired the priority in his *chef d'œuvre*,—would have enjoyed a singular spectacle, if he had lifted up the roof of the little house in the Rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, while Debray was casting up his figures. Above the room in which Debray had been dividing two millions and a half with Madame Danglars was another, inhabited by persons who have played too prominent a part in the incidents we have related for their appearance not to create some interest. Mercédès and Albert were in that room. Mercédès was much changed within the last few days ; not that, even in her days of fortune, she had ever dressed with that magnificent display which makes us no longer able to recognise a woman when she appears in a plain and simple attire ; nor, indeed, had she fallen into that state of depression where it is impossible to conceal the garb of misery ; no, the change in Mercédès was, that her eye no longer sparkled, her lips no longer smiled, and there was now a hesitation in uttering the words which formerly fell so fluently from her ready wit. It was not poverty which had broken her spirit ; it was not a want of courage which rendered her poverty burdensome. Mercédès descended from the exalted position she had occupied, lost in the sphere she had now chosen, like a person passing from a room splendidly lighted into utter darkness ; Mercédès appeared like a queen, fallen from her palace to a hovel, and who, reduced to strict necessity, could neither become reconciled to the earthen vessels she was herself forced to place upon the table, nor to the humble pallet which succeeded her bed. The beautiful Catalan and noble countess had lost both her proud glance and charming smile, because she saw nothing but misery around her : the walls were hung with one of those grey papers which economical landlords choose as not likely to show the dirt ; the floor was uncarpeted ; the furniture attracted the attention to the poor attempt at luxury ; indeed, everything offended the eyes accustomed to refinement and elegance.

Madame de Morcerf had lived there since leaving her hotel ; the continual silence of the spot oppressed her ; still, seeing that Albert continually watched her countenance, to judge the state of her feelings, she constrained herself to assume a monotonous smile of the lips alone, which, contrasted with the sweet and beaming expression that usually shone from her eyes, seemed like "moonlight on a statue,"—yielding light without

warmth. Albert, too, was ill at ease : the remains of luxury prevented his sinking into his actual position. If he wished to go out without gloves, his hands appeared too white ; if he wished to walk through the town, his boots seemed too highly polished. Yet these two noble and intelligent creatures, united by the indissoluble ties of maternal and filial love, had succeeded in tacitly understanding one another, and economizing their stores ; and Albert had been able to tell his mother without extorting a change of countenance,—“ Mother, we have no more money.” Mercédès had never known misery ; she had often, in her youth, spoken of poverty, but between want and necessity, those synonymous words, there is a wide difference. Amongst the Catalans, Mercédès wished for a thousand things, but still she never really wanted any. So long as the nets were good, they caught fish ; and so long as they sold their fish, they were able to buy thread for new nets. And then, shut out from friendship, having but one affection, which could not be mixed up with her ordinary pursuits, she thought of herself—of no one but herself. Upon the little she earned she lived as well as she could ; now there were two to be supported, and nothing to live upon.

Winter approached. Mercédès had no fire in that cold and naked room ; she, who was accustomed to stoves which heated the house from the hall to the boudoir—she had not even one little flower ; she whose apartment had been a conservatory of costly exotics. But she had her son. Hitherto the excitement of fulfilling a duty had sustained them. Excitement, like enthusiasm, sometimes renders us unconscious to the things of earth. But the excitement had calmed down, and they felt themselves obliged to descend from dreams to reality ; after having exhausted the ideal, they found they must talk of the actual.

“ Mother ! ” exclaimed Albert, just as Madame Danglars was descending the stairs, “ let us reckon our riches, if you please ; I want a capital to build my plans upon.”

“ Capital—nothing ! ” replied Mercédès, with a mournful smile.

“ No, mother,—capital 3,000 francs. . . And I have an idea of our leading a delightful life upon this 3,000 francs.”

“ Child ! ” sighed Mercédès.—“ Alas ! dear mother ! ” said the young man, “ I have unhappily spent too much of your money not to know the value of it. These 3,000 francs are enormous, and I intend building upon this foundation a miraculous certainty for the future.”

“ You say this, my dear boy ; but do you think we ought to accept these 3,000 francs ? ” said Mercédès, colouring.

“ I think so,” answered Albert, in a firm tone. “ We will accept them the more readily, since we have them not here ; you know they are buried in the garden of the little house in the Allées de Meillan, at Marseilles. With 200 francs we can reach Marseilles.”

“ With 200 francs?—think well, Albert.”

“ Oh ! as for that, I have made inquiries respecting the diligences and steamboats, and my calculations are made. You will take your place in the coupé to Châlons. You see, mother, I treat you handsomely for thirty-five francs.”

Albert then took a pen, and wrote :—

	Frs.
“ Coupé, thirty-five francs	35
From Châlons to Lyons you will go on by the steamboat	
—six francs	6

THE DIVISION.

From Lyons to Avignon (still by steamboat), sixteen francs	16
From Avignon to Marseilles, seven francs	7
Expenses on the road, about fifty francs	50

"Total" . . . 114 frs.

"Let us put down 120," added Albert, smiling. "You see I am generous, am I not, mother?"

"But you, my poor child?"

"I! do you not see I reserve eighty francs for myself? A young man does not require luxuries; besides, I know what travelling is."

"With a post-chaise and valet-de-chambre?"

"Any way, mother."

"Well, be it so. But these 200 francs?"—"Here they are, and more besides. See, I have sold my watch for 100 francs, and the guard seals for 300. How fortunate the ornaments were worth more than my watch. Still the same story of superfluities! Now I think we are rich since, instead of the 114 francs we require for the journey, we find ourselves in possession of 250."

"But we owe something in this house?"—"Thirty francs; but I pay that out of my 150 francs: that is understood; and, as I require only eighty francs for my journey, you see I am overwhelmed with luxury. But that is not all. What do you say to this, mother?"

And Albert took out of a little pocket-book with golden clasps, a remnant of his old fancies, or perhaps a tender *souvenir* from one of those mysterious and veiled ladies who used to knock at his little door,—Albert took out of this pocket-book a note of 1,000 francs.

"What is this?" asked Mercédès.

"A thousand francs."

"But whence have you obtained them?"—"Listen to me, mother, do not yield too much to agitation." And Albert, rising, kissed his mother on both cheeks, then stood looking at her. "You cannot imagine, mother, how beautiful I think you!" said the young man, impressed with a profound feeling of filial love. "You are, indeed, the most beautiful and most noble woman I ever saw!"

"Dear child!" said Mercédès, endeavouring in vain to restrain a smile which glistened in the corner of her eye. "Indeed, you only wanted a fortune to change my love for you to admiration. I am not unhappy while I possess my son!"—"Ah! just so," said Albert; "here begins the trial. Do you know the decision we have come to, mother?"

"Have we come to any?"—"Yes; it is decided that you are to leave for Marseilles, and that I am to leave for Africa, where I will earn for myself the right to use the name I now bear, instead of the one I have thrown aside." Mercédès sighed. "Well, mother! I yesterday engaged myself in the *Spahis*," added the young man, lowering his eyes with a certain feeling of shame, for even he was unconscious of the sublimity of his self-sacrifice. "I thought my body was my own, and that I might sell it. I yesterday took the place of another. I sold myself for more than I thought myself worth," he added, attempting to smile; "I fetched 2,000 francs."

"Then these 1,000 francs——" said Mercédès, shuddering—

"Are the half of the sum, mother; the other will be paid in a year." Mercédès raised her eyes to heaven with an expression it was impossible to describe, and tears, which had hitherto been restrained, yielded to her emotion, and ran down her cheeks.

"The price of his blood!" she murmured.

"Yes, if I am killed," said Albert, laughing. "But I assure you, mother, I have a strong intention of defending my person; and I never felt half so strong an inclination to live as at present."

"Merciful Heavens!"—"Besides, mother, why should you make up your mind that I am to be killed? Has Lamoricière, that Ney of the South, been killed? Has Changarnier been killed? Has Bedeau been killed? Has Morrel, whom we know, been killed? Think of your joy, mother, when you see me return with an embroidered uniform! I declare, I expect to look magnificent in it, and chose that regiment only from vanity." Mercédès sighed while endeavouring to smile: the devoted mother felt she ought not to allow the whole weight of the sacrifice to fall upon her son. "Well! now you understand, mother!" continued Albert; "here are more than 4,000 francs settled on you; upon these you can live at least two years."—"Do you think so?" said Mercédès. These words were uttered in so mournful a tone, that their real meaning did not escape Albert; he felt his heart beat, and, taking his mother's hand within his own, he said, tenderly,—

"Yes, you will live!"

"I shall live! then you will not leave me, Albert?"

"Mother, I must go," said Albert, in a firm, calm voice; "you love me too well to wish me to remain useless and idle with you; besides, I have signed."—"You will obey your own wish and the will of Heaven!"

"Not my own wish, mother, but reason—necessity. Are we not two despairing creatures? What is life to you?—Nothing. What is life to me?—Very little without you, mother; for, believe me, but for you, I should have ceased to live on the day I doubted my father, and renounced his name! Well, I will live, if you promise me still to hope; and if you grant me the care for your future prospects, you will redouble my strength. Then I will go to the governor of Algeria; he has a royal heart, and is essentially a soldier; I will tell him my gloomy story. I will beg him turn his eyes now and then towards me; and if he keep his word, and interest himself for me, in six months I shall be an officer, or dead. If I am an officer, your fortune is certain, for I shall have money enough for both; and, moreover, a name we shall both be proud of, since it will be our own. If I am killed—well, then, mother, you can also die, and there will be an end of our misfortunes."

"It is well," replied Mercédès, with her eloquent glance; "you are right, my love; let us prove to those who are watching our actions that we are worthy of compassion."

"But let us not yield to gloomy apprehensions," said the young man; "I assure you we are, or rather we shall be, very happy. You are a woman at once full of spirit and resignation; I have become simple in my tastes, and am without passion, I hope. Once in service, I shall be rich—once in M. Dantès's house, you will be at rest. Let us strive, I beseech you,—let us strive to be cheerful."—"Yes, let us strive, for you ought to live, and to be happy, Albert."

"And so our division is made, mother," said the young man, affecting ease of mind. "We can now part; come, I shall take your place."

"And you, my dear boy?"

"I shall stay here for a few days longer; we must accustom ourselves to parting. I want recommendations and some information relative to Africa. I will join you again at Marseilles."—"Well, be it so! let us part," said Mercédès, folding round her shoulders the only shawl she had

taken away, and which accidentally happened to be a valuable black cashmere. Albert gathered up his papers hastily, rang the bell to pay the thirty francs he owed to the landlord, and offering his arm to his mother, they descended the stairs. Some one was walking down before them, and this person, hearing the rustling of a silk dress, turned round. "Debray !" muttered Albert.

"You, Morcerf !" replied the secretary, resting on the stairs. Curiosity had vanquished the desire of preserving his incognito ; and he was recognised. It was, indeed, strange in this unknown spot to find the young man whose misfortunes had made so much noise in Paris.

"Morcerf !" repeated Debray. Then, noticing, in the dim light, the still youthful and veiled figure of Madame de Morcerf :—"Pardon me !" he added, with a smile, "I leave you, Albert." Albert understood his thoughts. "Mother," he said, turning towards Mercédès, "this is M. Debray, secretary of the minister for the interior, once a friend of mine."—"How once !" stammered Debray ; "what do you mean ?"

"I say so, M. Debray, because I have no friends now, and I ought not to have any. I thank you for having recognised me, sir." Debray stepped forward, and cordially pressed the hand of his interlocutor. "Believe me, dear Albert," he said, with all the emotion he was capable of feeling, "believe me, I feel deeply for your misfortunes, and if, in any way, I can serve you, I am yours."—"Thank you, sir," said Albert, smiling. "In the midst of our misfortunes we are still rich enough not to require assistance from any one. We are leaving Paris, and when our journey is paid, we shall have 5,000 francs left." The blood mounted to the temples of Debray, who held a million in his pocket-book ; and, unimagined as he was, he could not help reflecting that the same house had contained two women, one of whom, justly dishonoured, had left it poor with 1,500,000 francs under her cloak, while the other, unjustly stricken, but sublime in her misfortune, was yet rich with a few deniers. This parallel disturbed his usual politeness ; the philosophy he witnessed appalled him ; he muttered a few words of general civility, and ran downstairs.

That day the minister's clerks and the subordinates had a great deal to put up with from his ill-humour. But the same night he found himself the possessor of a fine house, situated on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and an income of 50,000 livres. The next day, just as Debray was signing the deed, that is, about five o'clock in the afternoon, Madame de Morcerf, after having affectionately embraced her son, entered the coupé of the diligence, which closed upon her. A man was hidden in Lafitte's banking-house, behind one of the little arched windows which are placed above each desk ; he saw Mercédès enter the diligence, and he also saw Albert withdraw. Then he passed his hand across his forehead, which was clouded with doubt. "Alas !" he exclaimed, "how can I restore the happiness I have taken away from these poor innocent creatures ? God help me !"

CHAPTER CVII.

THE LIONS' DEN.

ONE division of La Force, in which the most dangerous and desperate prisoners are confined, is called the Court of Saint-Bernard. The prisoners, in their expressive language, have named it the Lions' Den, probably because the captives possess teeth which frequently gnaw the bars, and some

times the keepers also. It is a prison within a prison ; the walls are double the thickness of the rest. The gratings are, every day, carefully examined by gaolers, whose herculean proportions and cold pitiless expression prove them to have been chosen to reign over their subjects, from their superior activity and intelligence. The court-yard of this quarter is enclosed by enormous walls, over which the sun glances obliquely, when it deigns to penetrate into this gulf of moral and physical deformity. On this paved yard are to be seen, pacing from morning till night, pale, careworn, and haggard, like so many shadows, the men whom justice holds beneath the steel she is sharpening. There, crouched against the side of the wall which attracts and retains the most heat, they may be seen sometimes talking to one another, but more frequently alone, watching the door, which sometimes opens to call forth one from the gloomy assemblage, or to throw in another outcast from society.

The Court of Saint-Bernard has its own particular parlour ; it is a long square, divided by two upright gratings, placed at a distance of three feet from one another, to prevent a visitor from shaking hands with or passing anything to the prisoners. It is a wretched, damp, nay, even horrible spot, more especially when we consider the fearful conferences which have taken place between those iron bars. And yet, frightful though this spot may be, it is considered as a kind of paradise to the men whose days are numbered ; it is so rare for them to leave the Lions' Den for any other place than the barrier Saint-Jacques or the galleys !

In the court which we have attempted to describe, and from which a damp vapour was rising, a young man might be seen walking, with his hands in his pockets, who had excited much curiosity amongst the inhabitants of the "Den." The cut of his clothes would have made him pass for an elegant man, if those clothes had not been torn to ribands ; still they were not worn, and the fine cloth soon recovered its gloss in the parts which were still perfect, beneath the careful hands of the prisoner, who tried to make it assume the appearance of a new coat. He bestowed the same attention upon the cambric front of a shirt, which had considerably changed in colour since his entrance into the prison ; and he polished his varnished boots with the corner of a handkerchief embroidered with initials surmounted by a coronet. Some of the inmates of the "Lions' Den" were watching the operations of the prisoner's toilet with considerable interest. "See, the prince is beautifying himself," said one of the thieves.

"He is naturally very handsome," said another ; "and if he had only a comb and some pomatum, he would soon eclipse all the gentlemen in white kids."—"His coat looks nearly new, and his boots are brilliant. It is pleasant to have such well-dressed brethren ; and those gendarmes behaved shamefully. What jealousy ; to tear such clothes !"

"He appears to be some one of consequence," said another ; "he dresses in first-rate style. And, then, to be here so young ! Oh ! it is splendid !" Meanwhile the object of this hideous admiration approached the wicket, against which one of the keepers was leaning. "Come, sir," he said, "lend me twenty francs ; you will soon be paid ; you run no risks with me. Remember, I have relations who possess more millions than you have deniers. Come, I beseech you, lend me twenty francs, so that I may buy a dressing-gown ; it is intolerable always to be in a coat and boots ! And what a coat, sir, for a prince of the Cavalcanti !" The keeper turned his back, and shrugged his shoulders ; he did not even laugh at what would have caused any one else to do so ; he had heard so many utter the same things,—indeed, he heard nothing else.

"Come," said Andrea, "you are a man void of compassion ; I will cause you to lose your place." This made the keeper turn round, and he burst into a loud laugh. The prisoners then approached, and formed a circle. "I tell you that with that wretched sum," continued Andrea, "I could obtain a coat, and a room in which to receive the illustrious visitor I am daily expecting."—"He is right ! he is right !" said the prisoners ; "any one can see he is a gentleman !"

"Well, then, lend him the twenty francs," said the keeper, leaning on the other shoulder ; "surely you will not refuse a comrade !"

"I am no comrade of these people," said the young man, proudly, "you have no right to insult me thus."

"Do you hear him ?" said the keeper, with a disagreeable smile ; "he rates you handsomely. Come, lend him the twenty francs—eh !" The thieves looked at one another with low murmurs, and a storm gathered over the head of the aristocratic prisoner, raised less by his own words than by the manner of the keeper. The latter, sure of quelling the tempest when the waves became too violent, allowed them to rise to a certain pitch, that he might be revenged on the importunate solicitor ; and, besides, it would afford him some recreation during the long day. The thieves had already approached Andrea, some screaming, "*La savate !—La savate !*"—a cruel operation, which consists in flogging any comrade who may have fallen into disgrace, not with an old shoe, but with an iron-heeled one. Others proposed *l'anguille*, another kind of recreation, in which a handkerchief is filled with sand, pebbles, and halfpence, when they have them, which the wretches discharge like a flail against the head and shoulders of the unhappy sufferer. "Let us horsewhip the fine gentleman !" said others.

But Andrea, turning towards them, winked his eyes, rolled his tongue round his cheeks, and smacked his lips in a manner equivalent to a hundred words among the bandits when forced to be silent. It was a masonic sign Caderousse had taught him. He was immediately recognised as one of them : the handkerchief was thrown down, and the iron-heeled shoe replaced on the foot of the wretch to whom it belonged. Some voices were heard to say that the gentleman was right ; that he intended to be civil, in his way, and that they would set the example of liberty of conscience ; and the mob retired. The keeper was so stupefied at this scene, that he took Andrea by the hands, and began examining his person, attributing the sudden submission of the inmates of the Lions' Den to something more substantial than mere fascination. Andrea made no resistance, though he protested against it. Suddenly a voice was heard at the wicket. "Benedetto !" exclaimed an inspector. The keeper relaxed his hold. "I am called," said Andrea. "To the parlour !" said the same voice.

"You see some one pays me a visit. Ah, my dear sir, you will see whether a Cavalcanti is to be treated like a common person !" And Andrea, gliding through the court like a black shadow, rushed out through the wicket, leaving his comrades, and even the keeper, lost in wonder. Certainly a call to the parlour had scarcely astonished Andrea less than themselves ; for the wily youth, instead of making use of his privilege of waiting to be claimed on his entry into La Force, had maintained a rigid silence. "Everything," he said, "proves me to be under the protection of some powerful person : this sudden fortune, the facility with which I have overcome all obstacles ; an unexpected family and an illustrious name awarded to me ; gold showered down upon me, and the most splendid

* *Savate* : an old shoe.

alliances about to be entered into. An unhappy lapse of fortune and the absence of my protector have reduced me, certainly, but not for ever. The hand which has retreated for a while will be again stretched forth to save me at the very moment when I shall think myself sinking into the abyss ! Why should I risk an imprudent step ? It might alienate my protector. He has two means of extricating me from this dilemma : the one by a mysterious escape, managed through bribery ; the other by buying off my judges with gold. I will say and do nothing until I am convinced that he has quite abandoned me ; and then——”

Andrea had formed a plan which was tolerably clever. The unfortunate youth was intrepid in the attack, and rude in the defence. He had borne with the public prison, and with privations of all sorts ; still, by degrees nature, or rather custom, had prevailed, and he suffered from being naked, dirty, and hungry. It was at this moment of *ennui* that the inspector's voice called him to the visiting-room. Andrea felt his heart leap with joy. It was too soon for a visit from the *juge d'instruction*, and too late for one from the director of the prison, or the doctor ;—it must, then, be the visitor he hoped for. Behind the grating of the room into which Andrea had been led, he saw, while his eyes dilated with surprise, the dark and intelligent face of M. Bertuccio, who was also gazing with sad astonishment upon the iron bars, the bolted doors, and the shadow which moved behind the other grating.

“ Ah ! ” said Andrea, deeply affected.——“ Good morning, Benedetto,” said Bertuccio, with his deep, hollow voice.

“ You—you ! ” said the young man, looking fearfully around him.

“ Do you not recognise me, unhappy child ? ”

“ Silence !—be silent ! ” said Andrea, who knew the delicate sense of hearing possessed by the walls ; “ for Heaven's sake, do not speak so loud ! ”

“ You wish to speak with me alone, do you not ? ” said Bertuccio.

“ Oh, yes ! ”——“ That is well ! ” And Bertuccio, feeling in his pocket, signed to a keeper whom he saw through the window of the wicket.

“ Read ! ” he said.——“ What is that ? ” asked Andrea.

“ An order to conduct you to a room, and to leave you there to talk with me. ”——“ Oh ! ” cried Andrea, leaping with joy. Then he mentally added,——“ Still my unknown protector ! I am not forgotten. They wish for secrecy, since we are to converse in a private room. I understand, Bertuccio has been sent by my protector. ”

The keeper spoke for a moment with a superior, then opened the iron gates, and conducted Andrea to a room on the first floor. The room was whitewashed, as is the custom in prisons : but it looked quite brilliant to a prisoner, though a stove, a bed, a chair, and a table, formed the whole of its sumptuous furniture. Bertuccio sat down upon the chair ; Andrea threw himself upon the bed ; the keeper retired.

“ Now,” said the steward, “ what have you to tell me ? ”

“ And you ? ” said Andrea.——“ You speak first. ”

“ Oh, no ! You must have much to tell me, since you have come to seek me. ”——“ Well, be it so ! You have continued your course of villainy ; you have robbed—you have assassinated. ”

“ Good ! If you had me taken to a private room only to tell me this, you might have saved yourself the trouble. I know all these things. But *there* are some with which, on the contrary, I am not acquainted. Let us talk of those, if you please. Who sent you ? ”

“ Come, come, you are going on quickly, M. Benedetto ! ”

"Yes, and to the point! Let us dispense with useless words. Who sends you?"—"No one."

"How did you know I was in prison?"—"I recognised you, some time since, as the insolent dandy who so gracefully mounted his horse in the Champs Elysées."

"Oh, the Champs Elysées! Ah, ah! we burn, as they say at some game. The Champs Elysées! Come, let us talk a little about my father!"—"Who, then, am I?"

"You, sir!—you are my adopted father. But it was not you, I presume, who placed at my disposal 100,000 francs, which I spent in four or five months; it was not you who manufactured an Italian gentleman for my father; it was not you who introduced me into the world, and had me invited to a certain dinner at Auteuil, which I fancy I am eating at this moment, in company with the most distinguished people in Paris—amongst the rest, with a certain procureur du roi, whose acquaintance I did very wrong not to cultivate, for he would have been very useful to me just now;—it was not you, in fact, who bailed me for one or two millions, when the fatal discovery of the *pot aux roses* took place. Come, speak, my worthy Corsican, speak!"

"What do you wish me to say?"

"I will help you. You were speaking of the Champs Elysées just now, worthy foster-father!"—"Well?"

"Well, in the Champs Elysées there resides a very rich gentleman."

"At whose house you robbed and murdered, did you not?"

"I believe I did."—"The Count of Monte-Cristo?"

"You have named him. Well, am I to rush into his arms, and strain him to my heart, crying, as they do in the dramas, 'My father! my father!'"—"Do not let us jest," gravely replied Bertuccio; "and dare not to utter that name again as you have pronounced it."

"Bah!" said Andrea, a little overcome by the solemnity of Bertuccio's manner, "why not?"—"Because the person who bears it is too highly favoured by Heaven to be the father of such a wretch as you!"

"Oh, these are fine words!"

"And there will be fine doings, if you do not take care!"

"Menaces!—I do not fear them. I will say——"

"Do you think you are engaged with a pigmy like yourself?" said Bertuccio, in so calm a tone, and with so steadfast a look, that Andrea was moved to the very soul. "Do you think you have to do with galley-slaves, or novices in the world? Benedetto, you are fallen into terrible hands; they are ready to open for you—make use of them! Do not play with the thunderbolt they have laid aside for a moment, but which they can take up again instantly, if you attempt to intercept their movements."—"My father—I will know who my father is!" said the obstinate youth; "I will perish if I must, but I *will* know it. What does scandal signify to me? What possessions, what reputation have I? You great people always lose something by scandal, notwithstanding your millions. Come, who is my father?"

"I came to tell you."—"Ah!" cried Benedetto, his eyes sparkling with joy. Just then the door opened, and the gaoler, addressing himself to Bertuccio, said,—"*Excuse me, sir, but the juge d'instruction is waiting for the prisoner.*"—"And so closes our interview," said Andrea to the worthy steward; "I wish the troublesome fellow were at the devil!"

"I will return to-morrow," said Bertuccio.

"Good! Gendarmes, I am at your service. Ah, sir, do leave a few

crowns for me at the gate, that I may have some things I am in need of!" — "It shall be done," replied Bertuccio. Andrea extended his hand; Bertuccio kept his own in his pocket, and merely jingled a few pieces of money. "That's what I mean," said Andrea, endeavouring to smile, quite overcome by the strange tranquillity of Bertuccio. "Can I be deceived?" he murmured, as he stepped into the oblong and grated vehicle which they call "the salad basket." "Never mind, we shall see! Then, to-morrow!" he added, turning towards Bertuccio.

"To-morrow!" replied the steward.

CHAPTER CVIII.

THE JUDGE.

WE remember that the Abbé Busoni remained alone with Noirtier in the chamber of death, and that the old man and the priest were the sole guardians of the young girl's body. Perhaps it was the Christian exhortations of the abbé, perhaps his kind charity, perhaps his persuasive words, which had restored the courage of Noirtier; for ever since he had conversed with the priest, his violent despair had yielded to a calm resignation which surprised all who knew his excessive affection for Valentine. M. de Villefort had not seen his father since the morning of the death. The whole establishment had been changed; another valet-le-chambre was engaged for himself; a new servant for Noirtier; two women had entered Madame de Villefort's service; in fact, everywhere, to the concierge and coachmen, new faces were presented to the different masters of the house, thus widening the division which had always existed between the members of the same family. The assizes, also, were about to commence; and Villefort, shut up in his room, exerted himself with feverish anxiety in drawing up the case against the murderer of Cadereousse. This affair, like all those in which the Count of Monte-Cristo had interferred, caused a great sensation in Paris. The proofs were certainly not convincing, since they rested upon a few words written by an escaped galley-slave on his death-bed, and who might have been actuated by hatred or revenge in accusing his companion. But the mind of the procureur du roi was made up: he felt assured that Benedetto was guilty, and he hoped by his skill in conducting this aggravated case, to flatter his self-love, which was about the only vulnerable point left in his frozen heart.

The case was therefore prepared owing to the incessant labour of Villefort, who showed it to be the first on the list in the coming assizes. He had been obliged to seduce himself more than ever, to evade the enormous number of applications presented to him for the purpose of obtaining tickets of admission to the court on the day of trial. And, then, so short a time had elapsed since the death of poor Valentine, and the gloom which overshadowed the house was so recent, that no one wondered to see the father so absorbed in his professional duties, which were the only means he had of dissipating his grief. Once only had Villefort seen his father; it was the day after that upon which Bertuccio had paid his second visit to Benedetto, when the latter was to learn his father's name. The magistrate, harassed and fatigued, had descended to the garden of his hotel, and in a gloomy mood, similar to that in which Tarquin lopped off the tallest poppies, he began knocking off with his cane the long and dying branches of the rose-trees, which, placed along the avenue, seemed like the spectres of the brilliant flowers which had bloomed in the past season.

More than once he had reached that part of the garden where the famous paling stood overlooking the deserted inclosure ; and always returning by the same path, he recommenced his walk, at the same pace and with the same gesture, when he accidentally turned his eyes towards the house, where he heard the sound of his son playing noisily, who had returned from school to spend the Sunday and Monday with his mother. While doing so, he observed M. Noirtier at one of the open windows, where the old man had been placed that he might enjoy the last rays of a sun which yet yielded some heat, and was now shining upon the dying flowers and red leaves of the creeper which twined round the balcony.

The eye of the old man was riveted upon a spot which Villefort could scarcely distinguish. His glance was so full of hate, of ferocity, and savage impatience, that Villefort turned out of the path he had been pursuing, to see upon what person this dark look was directed. Then he saw beneath a thick clump of linden-trees, which were nearly divested of foliage, Madame de Villefort sitting with a book in her hand, the perusal of which she frequently interrupted to smile upon her son, or to throw back his elastic ball, which he obstinately threw from the drawing-room into the garden. Villefort became pale ; he understood the old man's meaning. Noirtier continued to look at the same object, but suddenly his glance was carried from the wife to the husband, and Villefort himself had to submit to the searching investigation of those eyes, which, while changing their object and even their language, had lost none of their menacing expression. Madame de Villefort, unconscious of all those passions that exhausted their fire over her head, at that moment held her son's ball, and was making signs to him to reclaim it with a kiss. Edward begged for a long while, the maternal kiss probably not offering sufficient recompense for the trouble he must take to obtain it : however, at length, he decided, leaped out of the window into a cluster of heliotropes and daisies, and ran to his mother, his forehead streaming with perspiration. Madame de Villefort wiped his forehead, pressed her lips upon it, and sent him back with the ball in one hand and some bonbons in the other.

Villefort, drawn by an irresistible attraction, like that of the bird to the serpent, walked towards the house. As he approached it, Noirtier's gaze followed him, and his eyes appeared of such a fiery brightness that Villefort felt them pierce to the depths of his heart. In that earnest look might be read a deep reproach, as well as a terrible menace. Then Noirtier raised his eyes to heaven, as though to remind his son of a forgotten oath. "It is well, sir," replied Villefort from below,— "it is well ; have patience but one day longer ; what I have said I will do." Noirtier appeared calmed by these words, and turned his eyes with indifference to the other side. Villefort violently unbuttoned his great-coat, which seemed to strangle him, and passing his livid hand across his forehead, entered his study. The night was cold and still ; the family had all retired to rest but Villefort, who alone remained up, and worked till five o'clock in the morning, reviewing the last interrogatories made the night before by the *juges d'instruction*, compiling the depositions of the witnesses, and putting the finishing stroke to the deed of accusation, which was one of the most energetic and best conceived of any he had yet delivered.

The next day, Monday, was the first sitting of the assizes. The morning rose black and gloomy, and Villefort saw the dim gray light shine upon the lines he had traced in red ink. The magistrate had slept for a short time while the lamp sent forth its final struggles ; its flickerings awoke him, and he found his fingers as damp and purple as though they had been dipped

in blood. He opened the window ; a bright yellow streak crossed the sky, and seemed to divide in half the poplars, which stood out in black relief on the horizon. In the clover-fields beyond the chestnut-trees, a lark was mounting up to heaven, while pouring out her clear morning song. The damps of the dew bathed the head of De Villefort, and refreshed his memory. "To-day," he said with an effort,—“to-day the man who holds knife of justice must strike wherever there is guilt.” Involuntarily his eyes wandered towards the window of Noirtier's room, whence he had seen him the preceding night. The curtain was drawn, and yet the image of his father was so vivid to his mind that he addressed the closed window as though it had been open, and as if through the opening he had beheld the menacing old man. "Yes," he murmured,—“yes, be satisfied.”

His head dropped upon his chest, and in this position he paced his study ; then he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon a sofa, less to sleep than to rest his limbs, cramped with cold and study. By degrees every one woke : Villefort, from his study, heard the successive noises which constitute the life of a house : the opening and shutting of doors, the ringing of Madame de Villefort's bell, to summon the waiting-maid, mingled with the first shouts of the child, who rose full of the enjoyment of his age. Villefort also rang ; his new valet-de-chambre brought him the papers, and with them a cup of chocolate.

"What are you bringing me?" said he.—“A cup of chocolate.”

"I did not ask for it. Who has paid me this attention?"—"My mistress, sir. She said you would have to speak a great deal on the case of the murder, and that you should take something to keep up your strength ;" and the valet placed the cup on the table nearest to the sofa, which was, like all the rest, covered with papers. The valet then left the room. Villefort looked for an instant with a gloomy expression, then, suddenly taking it up with a nervous motion, he swallowed its contents at one draught. It might have been thought that he hoped the beverage would be mortal, and that he sought for death to deliver him from a duty which he would rather die than fulfil. He then rose, and paced his room with a smile it would have been terrible to witness. The chocolate was inoffensive, for M. de Villefort felt no effects. The breakfast-hour arrived, but M. de Villefort was not at table. The valet-de-chambre re-entered.

"Madame de Villefort wishes to remind you, sir," he said, "that eleven o'clock has just struck, and that the trial commences at twelve."

"Well!" said Villefort ; "what then?"

"Madame de Villefort is dressed : she is quite ready, and wishes to know if she is to accompany you, sir?"—"Where to?"

"To the Palais."—"What to do?"

"My mistress wishes much to be present at the trial."—"Ah!" said Villefort, with a startling accent ; "does she wish that?"—"The servant drew back and said,—“If you wish to go alone, sir, I will go and tell my mistress.” Villefort remained silent for a moment, and dented his pale cheeks with his nails. "Tell your mistress," he at length answered, "that I wish to speak to her, and I beg she will wait for me in her own room."—"Yes, sir."

"Then come to dress and shave me."—"Directly, sir." The valet-de-chambre re-appeared almost instantly, and, having shaved his master, assisted him to dress entirely in black. When he had finished, he said,—

"My mistress said she should expect you, sir, as soon as you had finished dressing."—"I am going to her." And Villefort, with his papers under his arm, and hat in hand, directed his steps towards the apartment of his wife.

At the door he paused for a moment, to wipe his damp, pale brow. He then entered the room. Madame de Villefort was sitting on an ottoman, and impatiently turning over the leaves of some newspapers and pamphlets which young Edward, by way of amusing himself, was tearing to pieces before his mother could finish reading them. She was dressed to go out, her bonnet was placed beside her on a chair, and her gloves were on her hands.

"Ah! here you are, sir," she said, in her naturally calm voice; "but how pale you are! Have you been working all night? Why did you not come down to breakfast? Well, will you take me, or shall I take Edward?" Madame de Villefort had multiplied her questions in order to gain one answer, but to all her inquiries M. de Villefort remained mute and cold as a statue. "Edward!" said Villefort, fixing an imperious glance on the child, "go and play in the drawing-room, my dear: I wish to speak to your mamma." Madame de Villefort shuddered at the sight of that cold countenance, that resolute tone, and the awfully strange preliminaries. Edward raised his head, looked at his mother, and then, finding that she did not confirm the order, began cutting off the heads of his leaden soldiers.

"Edward!" cried M. de Villefort, so harshly that the child started on the carpet, "do you hear me?—Go!" The child, unaccustomed to such treatment, rose, pale and trembling; it would be difficult to say whether his emotion were caused by fear or passion. His father went up to him, took him in his arms, and kissed his forehead. "Go," he said: "go, my child." Edward ran out. M. de Villefort went to the door, which he closed behind the child, and bolted. "Oh, Heavens!" said the young woman, endeavouring to read her husband's inmost thoughts, while a smile passed over her countenance which froze the impassibility of Villefort. "What is the matter?"—"Madame, where do you keep the poison you generally use?" said the magistrate, without any introduction, placing himself between his wife and the door.

Madame de Villefort must have experienced somewhat of the sensation of a bird which, looking up, sees the murderous spring closed over its head. A hoarse, broken tone, which was neither a cry nor a sigh, escaped from her, while she became deadly pale. "Sir," she said, "I—I do not understand you." And, in her first paroxysm of terror, she had raised herself from the sofa, in the next, stronger very likely than the other, she fell down again on the cushions. "I asked you," continued Villefort, in a perfectly calm tone, "where you conceal the poison by the aid of which you have killed my father-in-law, M. de Saint-Méran, my mother-in-law, Madame de Saint-Méran, Barrois, and my daughter Valentine."—"Ah, sir," exclaimed Madame de Villefort, clasping her hands, "what do you say?"

"It is not for you to interrogate, but to answer."

"Is it to the judge or to the husband?" stammered Madame de Villefort. "To the judge—to the judge, madame!" It was terrible to behold the frightful pallor of that woman, the anguish of her look, the trembling of her whole frame. "Ah, sir!" she muttered, "ah, sir!" and this was all.

"You do not answer, madame!" exclaimed the terrible interrogator. Then he added, with a smile yet more terrible than his anger, "It is true, then: you do not deny it!" She moved forward. "And you cannot deny it!" added Villefort, extending his hand towards her, as though to seize her in the name of justice. "You have accomplished these different crimes with impudent address, but which could only deceive those whose affection for you blinded them. Since the death of Madame de Saint-

THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

And I have known that a poisoner lived in my house. M. d'Avrigny warned me of it. After the death of Barrois my suspicions were directed towards an angel,—those suspicions which, even when there is no crime, are always alive in my heart: but after the death of Valentine, there has been no doubt in my mind, madame, and not only in mine, but in those of others; thus your crime, known by two persons, suspected by many, will soon become public: and, as I told you just now, you no longer speak to the husband, but to the judge." The young woman hid her face in her hands. "Oh, sir!" she stammered, "I beseech you, do not believe appearances."—"Are you, then, a coward?" cried Villefort, in a contemptuous voice. "But I have always remarked that poisoners were cowards. Can you be a coward, you, who have had the courage to witness the death of two old men and a young girl murdered by you?"—"Sir! sir!"—"Can you be a coward?" continued Villefort, with increasing excitement, "you, who could count, one by one, the minutes of four death-agonies? *You*, who have arranged your infernal plans, and removed the beverages with a talent and precision almost miraculous? Have you, then, who have calculated everything with such nicety, have you forgotten to calculate one thing—I mean where the revelation of your crimes will lead you to? Oh! it is impossible—you must have saved some surer, more subtle and deadly poison than any other, that you might escape the punishment that you deserve. You have done this—I hope so, at least." Madame de Villefort stretched out her hands, and fell on her knees.

"I understand," he said, "you confess; but a confession made to the judges, a confession made at the last moment, extorted when the crime cannot be denied, diminishes not the punishment inflicted on the guilty!"

"The punishment!" exclaimed Madame de Villefort, "the punishment, sir! Twice you have pronounced that word!"

"Certainly. Did you hope to escape it, because you were four times guilty? Did you think the punishment would be withheld because you are the wife of him who pronounces it?—No! madame, no! the scaffold awaits the poisoner, whoever she may be, unless, as I just said, the poisoner has taken the precaution of keeping for herself a few drops of her deadliest poison." Madame de Villefort uttered a wild cry, and a hideous and uncontrollable terror spread over her distorted features. "Oh! do not fear the scaffold, madame," said the magistrate; "I will not dishonour you, since that would be dishonour to myself: no! if you have heard me distinctly, you will understand that you are not to die on the scaffold."—"No! I do not understand; what do you mean?" stammered the unhappy woman, completely overwhelmed. "I mean that the wife of the first magistrate in the capital shall not, by her infamy, soil an unblemished name; that she shall not, with one blow, dishonour her husband and her child."—"No, no!—oh, no!"

"Well! madame, it will be a laudable action on your part, and I will thank you for it."—"You will thank me—for what?"

"For what you have just said."—"What did I say? Oh, my brain whirls; I no longer understand anything. Oh, Heavens! oh, Heavens!" And she rose, with her hair dishevelled, and her lips foaming.

"Have you answered the question I put to you on entering the room? Where do you keep the poison you generally use, madame?" Madame de Villefort raised her arms to heaven, and convulsively struck one hand against the other. "No, no!" she vociferated, "no, you cannot wish that!"—"What I do not wish, madame, is, that you should perish on the scaffold. Do you understand?" asked Villefort.

"Oh, mercy, mercy, sir!"—"What I require is, that justice be done. I am on the earth to punish, madame," he added, with a flaming glance; "any other woman, were it the queen herself, I would send to the executioner; but to you I shall be merciful. To you I will say—Have you not, madame, put aside some of the surest, deadliest, most speedy poison?"—"Oh! pardon me, sir; let me live!"

"She is cowardly," said Villefort—"Reflect that I am your wife!"

"You are a poisoner."—"In the name of Heaven!"—"No!"

"In the name of the love you once bore me!"—"No, no!"

"In the name of our child! Ah, for the sake of our child, let me live!"

"No! no! no! I tell you; one day, if I allow you to live, you will perhaps kill him, as you have the others!"

"I!—I kill my boy!" cried the distracted mother, rushing towards Villefort; "I kill my son! Ha! ha! ha!" and a frightful, demoniac laugh finished the sentence, which was lost in a hoarse rattle. Madame de Villefort fell at her husband's feet. He approached her. "Think of it, madame," he said; "if, on my return, justice has not been satisfied, I will denounce you with my own mouth, and arrest you with my own hands!" She listened, panting, overwhelmed, crushed, her eye alone lived, and glared horribly. "Do you understand me?" he said. "I am going down there to pronounce the sentence of death against a murderer. If I find you alive on my return, you shall sleep to-night in the conciergerie." Madame de Villefort sighed; her nerves gave way, and she sunk on the carpet. The procureur du roi seemed to experience a sensation of pity; he looked upon her less severely, and, bowing to her, said slowly: "Farewell, madame! farewell!" That farewell struck Madame de Villefort like the executioner's knife. She fainted. The procureur du roi went out, after having double-locked the door.

CHAPTER CIX.

THE ASSIZES.

THE Benedetto affair, as it was called in the Palais, and by people in general, had produced a tremendous sensation. Frequenting the Café de Paris, the Boulevard de Gand, and the Bois de Boulogne, during his brief career of splendour, the false Cavalcanti had formed a host of acquaintances. The papers had related his various adventures, both as the man of fashion and the galley-slave; and as every one who had been personally acquainted with the Prince Cavalcanti experienced a lively curiosity in his fate, they all determined to spare no trouble in endeavouring to witness the trial of M. Benedetto for the murder of his comrade. In the eyes of many, Benedetto appeared, if not a victim to, at least an instance of, the fallibility of the law. M. Cavalcanti, his father, had been seen in Paris, and it was expected he would reappear, to claim the illustrious outcast. Many, also, who were not aware of the circumstances attending his withdrawal from Paris, were struck with the worthy appearance, the gentlemanly bearing, and the knowledge of the world displayed by the old patrician, who certainly played the nobleman very well, so long as he said nothing, and made no arithmetical calculations. As for the accused himself, many remembered him as being so amiable, so handsome, and so liberal, that they chose to think him the victim of some conspiracy, since, in this world, large fortunes frequently excite the malevolence and jealousy

of some unknown enemy. Every one, therefore, ran to the court : some to witness the sight, others to comment upon it. From seven o'clock in the morning a crowd was stationed at the iron gates, and, an hour before the trial commenced, the hall was full of the privileged. Before the entrance of the magistrates, and indeed frequently afterwards, a court of justice, on days when some especial trial is to take place, resembles a drawing-room, where many persons recognise each other, and converse, if they can do so without losing their seats, and, when they are separated by too great a number of lawyers, communicate by signs.

It was one of those magnificent autumn days which make amends for a short summer ; the clouds which M. de Villefort had perceived at sunrise had all disappeared as if by magic, and one of the softest and most brilliant days of September shone forth in all its splendour.

Beauchamp, one of the kings of the press, and therefore claiming the right of a throne everywhere, was looking round on every side. He perceived Château-Renaud and Debray, who had just gained the good graces of a sergent-de-ville, and who had persuaded the latter to let them stand before, instead of behind him, as he ought to have done. The worthy agent had recognised the minister's secretary and the millionaire, and, by way of paying extra attention to his noble neighbours, promised to keep their places while they paid a visit to Beauchamp.

"Well !" said Beauchamp, "we shall see our friend !"

"Yes, indeed !" replied Debray. "That worthy prince. Deuce take those Italian princes !"

"A man, too, who could boast of Dante for a genealogist, and could reckon as far back of the 'Divina-Commedia.'"

"A nobility of the rope !" said Château-Renaud, phlegmatically.

"He will be condemned, will he not ?" asked Debray of Beauchamp.

"My dear fellow, I think we should ask you that question : you know such news much better than we do. Did you see the president at the minister's last night ?"

"Yes."—"What did he say ?"

"Something which will surprise you."—"Oh ! make haste and tell me, then : it is a long time since that has happened."

"Well ! he told me that Benedetto, who is considered a serpent of subtlety and a giant of cunning, is really but a very subordinate, silly rascal, and altogether unworthy of the experiments that will be made on his phrenological organs after his death."

"Bah !" said Beauchamp, "he played the prince very well."

"Yes, for you who detest those unhappy princes, Beauchamp, and are always delighted to find fault with them : but not for me, who discover a gentleman by instinct, and who scent out an aristocratic family like a very bloodhound of heraldry."

"Then you never believed in the principality ?"

"Yes ! in the principality, but not in the prince."

"Not so bad," said Beauchamp : "still, I assure you, he passed very well with many people ; I saw him at the ministers' houses."

"Ah, yes !" said Château-Renaud. "The idea of thinking ministers understand anything about princes !"—"There is something in what you have just said," said Beauchamp, laughing.

"But," said Debray to Beauchamp, "if I spoke to the president, *jez* must have been with the *procureur du roi*."

"It was an impossibility ; for the last week M. de Villefort has secluded

himself. It is natural enough ; this strange chain of domestic afflictions, followed by the no less strange death of his daughter——”

“Strange ! What do you mean, Beauchamp ?——“ Oh, yes ! Do you pretend that all this has been unobserved at the minister’s ?” said Beauchamp, placing his eye-glass in his eye, where he tried to make it remain.——“ My dear sir,” said Château-Renaud, “allow me to tell you that you do not understand that manœuvre with the eye-glass half so well as Debray. Give him a lesson, Debray.”

“Stay,” said Beauchamp, “surely I am not deceived.”

“What is it ?”——“It is she !”

“Who do you mean ?”——“They said she had left.”

“Mademoiselle Eugénie ?” said Château-Renaud ; “has she returned ?”

“No ! but her mother.”——“Madame Danglars ? Nonsense ! Impossible !” said Château-Renaud ; “only ten days after the flight of her daughter, and three days from the bankruptcy of her husband ?”

Debray coloured slightly, and followed with his eyes the direction of Beauchamp’s glance. “Come,” he said, “it is only a veiled lady, some foreign princess ; perhaps the mother of Cavalcanti. But you were just speaking on a very interesting topic, Beauchamp.”——“I ?”

“Yes ; you were telling us about the extraordinary death of Valentine.”

“Ah, yes, so I was. But how is it that Madame de Villefort is not here ?”——“Poor, dear woman !” said Debray, “she is no doubt occupied in distilling balm for the hospitals, or in making cosmetics for herself or friends. Do you know she spends two or three thousand crowns a year in this amusement ? But I wonder she is not here. I should have been pleased to see her, for I like her very much.”

“And I hate her,” said Château-Renaud.

“Why ?”——“I do not know. Why do we love ? Why do we hate ? I detest her, from antipathy.”——“Or, rather, by instinct.”

“Perhaps so. But to return to what you were saying, Beauchamp.”

“Well ! do you know why people die so fast in M. de Villefort’s house ?”——“Talking of that,” said Debray, “Madame ° ° ° was making inquiries about that house, which for the last three months has been hung with black.”

“Who is Madame ° ° ° ?” asked Château-Renaud.

“The minister’s wife, *pardieu* !”

“Oh, your pardon ! I never visit ministers ; I leave that to the princes.”——“Really, you were before only sparkling, but now you are brilliant ; take compassion on us, or, like Jupiter, you will burn us.”

“I will not speak again !” said Château-Renaud ; “pray have compassion upon me, and do not take up every word I say.”

“Come, let us endeavour to hear the end of your story, Beauchamp : I told you that yesterday Madame ° ° ° made inquiries of me upon the subject ; enlighten me, and I will then communicate my information to her.”——“Well, gentlemen, the reason people die so fast at M. de Villefort’s, is, that there is an assassin in the house !” The two young men shuddered, for the same idea had more than once occurred to them.

“And who is the assassin ?” they asked together. “Young Edward !” A burst of laughter from the auditors did not in the least disconcert the speaker, who continued : “Yes, gentlemen ; Edward, who is quite an adept in the art of killing.”——“You are jesting.”

“Not at all. I yesterday engaged a servant, who had just left M. de Villefort—I intend sending him away to-morrow, for he eats so enor-

mously, to make up for the fast imposed upon him by his terror in that house. Well! listen to me."—"We are listening."—"It appears the dear child has obtained possession of a bottle containing some drug, which he every now and then uses against those who have displeased him. First, M. and Madame de Saint-Méran incurred his displeasure, so he poured out three drops of his elixir—three drops were sufficient; then followed Barrois, the old servant of M. Noirtier, who sometimes rebuffed this little wretch—he therefore received the same quantity of the elixir; the same happened to Valentine, of whom he was jealous; he gave her the same dose as the others, and all was over for her as well as the rest."

"Why, what nonsense are you telling us?" said Château-Renaud.

"Yes, it is an extraordinary story!" said Beauchamp; "is it not?"

"It is absurd," said Debray.—"Ah!" said Beauchamp, "you doubt me? Well, you can ask my servant, or rather him who will no longer be my servant to-morrow: it was the talk of the house."

"And this elixir, where is it? what is it?"

"The child conceals it."—"But where did he find it?"

"In his mother's laboratory."

"Does his mother, then, keep poisons in her laboratory?"

"How can I tell? You are questioning me like a *procureur du roi*. I only repeat what I have been told, and, like my author, I can do no more. The poor wretch would eat nothing, from fear."

"It is incredible!"—"No, my dear fellow, it is not at all incredible! You saw the child pass through the Rue Richelieu last year, who amused himself with killing his brothers and sisters by sticking pins in their ears while they slept. The generation who follow us are very precocious!"

"Come, Beauchamp," said Château-Renaud, "I will bet anything you do not believe a word of all you have been telling us!"

"I do not see the Count of Monte-Cristo here?"

"He is worn out," said Debray; "besides, he could not well appear in public, since he has been the dupe of the Cavalcanti, who, it appears, presented themselves to him with false letters of credit, and cheated him out of 100,000 francs upon the hypothesis of this principality."—"By the way, M. de Château-Renaud," asked Beauchamp, "how is Morrel?"—"Ma foi! I have called three times without once seeing him. Still, his sister did not seem uneasy, and told me that though she had not seen him for two or three days, she was sure he was well."—"Ah, now I think of it, the Count of Monte-Cristo cannot appear in the hall!" said Beauchamp.

"Why not?"

"Because he is an actor in the drama!"

"Has he assassinated any one, then?"—"No, on the contrary, they wished to assassinate him. You know that it was in leaving his house that M. de Caderousse was murdered by his friend Benedetto. You know that the famous waistcoat was found in his house, containing the letter which stopped the signature of the marriage contract. Do you see the waistcoat? There it is, all blood-stained, on the desk, as a testimony of the crime."

"Ah, very good."—"Hush, gentlemen! here is the court; let us go back to our places." A noise was heard in the hall; the sergeant-de-ville called his two *protégés* with an energetic "Hem!" and the door-keeper appearing, called out, with that shrill voice peculiar to his order, even in the days of Beaumarchais, "The court, gentlemen!"

CHAPTER CX.

THE DEED OF ACCUSATION.

THE judges took their places in the midst of the most profound silence ; the jury took their seats ; M. de Villefort, the object of unusual attention, and we had almost said of general admiration, sat in the arm-chair, and cast a tranquil glance around him. Every person looked with astonishment on that grave and severe face, the calm expression of which personal griefs had been unable to disturb ; and the aspect of a man who was a stranger to all human emotions, excited a kind of terror.

"Gendarmes !" said the president, "lead in the accused."

At these words the public attention became more intense, and all eyes were turned towards the door through which Benedetto was to enter. The door soon opened, and the accused appeared. The same impression was experienced by all present ; and no one was deceived by the expression of his countenance. His features bore no sign of that deep emotion which stops the beating of the heart and blanches the cheek. His hands, gracefully placed, one upon his hat, the other in the opening of his white waistcoat, were not at all tremulous ; his eye was calm, and even brilliant. Scarcely had he entered the hall, when he glanced at the whole body of magistrates and assistants : his eye rested longer on the president, and still more so on the procureur du roi. By the side of Andrea was placed the lawyer who was to conduct his defence, and who had been chosen by the court ; for Andrea disdained to pay any attention to those details, to which he appeared to attach no importance. The lawyer was a young man with light hair, and whose face expressed a hundred times more emotion than that which characterized the prisoner.

The president called for the deed of accusation, corrected, as we know, by the clever and implacable pen of De Villefort. During the reading of this, which was long, the public attention was continually drawn towards Andrea, who bore the burden with Spartan unconcern. Villefort had never been so concise and eloquent : the crime was represented under the liveliest colours ; the former life of the prisoner, his transformation, a review of his life from the earliest period, were set forth with all the talent that a knowledge of human life could furnish to a mind like that of the procureur du roi. Benedetto was thus for ever lost in public opinion before the sentence of the law could be pronounced. Andrea paid no attention to the successive charges which were brought against him. M. de Villefort, who examined him attentively, and who no doubt practised upon him all the psychological studies he was accustomed to use, in vain endeavoured to make him lower his eyes, notwithstanding the depth and profundity of his gaze. At length the deed was read.

"Accused," said the president, "your name and surname?" Andrea rose. "Excuse me, M. le Président," he said, in a clear voice, "but I see you are going to adopt a course of questions through which I cannot follow you. I have an idea, which I will explain by-and-by, of making an exception to the usual form of accusation. Allow me, then, if you please, to answer in different order, or I will not do so at all." The astonished president looked at the jury, who themselves looked upon the procureur du roi. The whole assembly manifested great surprise ; but Andrea appeared quite unmoved. "Your age?" said the president : "will you answer that question?"—"I will answer that question, as well as the rest, M. le Président, but in its turn."

"Your age?" repeated the president.

"I am twenty-one years old ; or rather I shall be in a few days, as I was born the night of the 27th of September, 1817." M. de Villefort, who was busy taking down some notes, raised his head at the mention of this date. "Where were you born?" continued the president.—"At Auteuil, near Paris." M. de Villefort a second time raised his head, looked at Benedetto, as if he had been gazing at the head of Medusa, and became livid. As for Benedetto, he gracefully wiped his lips with a fine cambric pocket-handkerchief. "Your profession?"—"First I was a forger," answered Andrea, as calmly as possible ; "then I became a thief ; and, lately, have become an assassin." A murmur, or rather storm, of indignation burst from all parts of the assembly. The judges themselves appeared stupefied ; and the jury manifested tokens of disgust for a stoicism so unexpected from a fashionable man. M. de Villefort pressed his hand upon his brow, which, at first pale, had become red and burning ; then he suddenly rose, and looked around as though he had lost his senses—he wanted air.

"Are you looking for anything, M. le Procureur du Roi?" asked Benedetto, with his most pleasing smile. M. de Villefort answered nothing, but sat, or rather threw himself down again upon his chair. "And now, prisoner, will you consent to tell your name?" said the president. "The brutal affectation with which you have enumerated and classified your crimes calls for a severe reprimand on the part of the court, both in the name of morality, and for the respect due to humanity. You appear to consider this a point of honour, and it may be for this reason you have delayed acknowledging your name. You wished it to be preceded by all these titles."

"It is quite wonderful, M. le Président, how entirely you have read my thoughts," said Benedetto, in his softest voice and most polite manner. "This is, indeed, the reason why I begged you to alter the order of the questions." The public astonishment had reached its height. There was no longer any deceit or bravado in the manner of the accused. The audience seemed like some thunder-cloud about to burst over the gloomy scene.

"Well?" said the president : "your name?"—"I cannot tell you my name, since I do not know it ; but I know my father's, and will pronounce it."

"Repeat your father's name," said the president. Not a whisper, not a breath was heard in that vast assembly ; every one waited anxiously.

"My father is the procureur du roi," replied Andrea, calmly.

"The procureur du roi?" said the president, stupefied, and without noticing the agitation which spread over the face of M. de Villefort : "the procureur du roi?"—"Yes ; and if you wish to know his name, I will tell it,—he is named Villefort." The explosion, which had been so long restrained, from a feeling of respect to the court of justice, now burst forth like thunder from the breasts of all present ; the court itself did not seek to restrain the movement of the multitude. The exclamations, the insults addressed to Benedetto, who remained perfectly unconcerned, the energetic gestures, the movement of the gendarmes, the sneers of the scum of the crowd—always sure to rise to the surface in case of any disturbance—all this lasted five minutes, before the door-keepers and magistrates were able to restore silence. In the midst of this tumult the voice of the president was heard to exclaim,—*"Are you playing with justice, accused, and do you dare set your fellow-citizens an example of disorder which even in these times has never been equalled?"*

Several persons hurried up to M. de Villefort, who was nearly buried in a chair, offering him consolation, encouragement, and protestations of love and sympathy. Order was re-established in the hall, with the exception of a few who still moved and whispered. A lady, it was said, had fainted; they had supplied her with a smelling-bottle, and she had recovered. During the scene of tumult, Andrea had turned his smiling face towards the assembly; then, leaning with one hand on the oaken rail of his bench, in the most graceful attitude possible, he said:—"Gentlemen, I assure you I had no idea of insulting the court, or of making a needless disturbance in the presence of this honourable assembly. They ask my age; I tell it. They ask where I was born; I answer. They ask my name; I cannot give it, since my parents abandoned me. But though I cannot give my own name, not possessing one, I can tell them my father's. Now I repeat, my father is named M. de Villefort, and I am ready to prove it."

There was an energy, a conviction, and a sincerity in the manner of the young man, which silenced the tumult. All eyes were turned for a moment towards the procureur du roi, who sat as motionless as though a thunderbolt had changed him into a corpse. "Gentlemen!" said Andrea, commanding silence by his voice and manner; "I owe you the proofs and explanations of what I have said."—"But," said the irritated president, "you called yourself Benedetto, declared yourself an orphan, and claimed Corsica as your country."

"I said anything I pleased, in order that the solemn declaration I have made should not be withheld, which otherwise would certainly have been the case. I now repeat that I was born at Auteuil on the night of the 27th September, 1817, and that I am the son of the procureur du roi, M. de Villefort. Do you wish for any further details? I will give them. I was born in No. 28, Rue de la Fontaine, in a room hung with red damask: my father took me in his arms, telling my mother I was dead; wrapped me in a napkin marked with an H and an N; and carried me into a garden, where he buried me alive."

A shudder ran through the assembly when they saw that the confidence of the prisoner increased in proportion with the terror of M. de Villefort. "But how have you become acquainted with all these details?" asked the president.

"I will tell you, M. le Président. A man who had sworn vengeance against my father, and had long watched his opportunity to kill him, had introduced himself that night into the garden in which my father buried me. He was concealed in a thicket; he saw my father bury something in the ground, and stabbed him in the midst of the operation; then, thinking the deposit might contain some treasure, he turned up the ground, and found me still living. The man carried me to the hospital for *enfants trouvés*, where I was inscribed under the number 37. Three months afterwards, a woman travelled from Rogliano to Paris to fetch me, and having claimed me as her son, carried me away. Thus, you see, though born in Corsica, I was brought up in Corsica."

There was a moment's silence, during which one could have fancied the hall empty, so profound was the stillness. "Proceed!" said the president.—"Certainly, I might have lived happily amongst those good people, who adored me; but my perverse disposition prevailed over the virtues which my adopted mother endeavoured to instil into my heart. I increased my wickedness till I committed crime. One day when I cursed Providence for making me so wicked, and ordaining me to such a fate, my adopted

father said to me, 'Do not blaspheme, unhappy child! the crime is your father's not yours; your father's, who devoted you to death, or to a life of misery, in case, by a miracle, you should escape his doom.' Since then I ceased to blaspheme, but I cursed my father. This is why I have uttered the words for which you blame me; this is why I have filled this whole assembly with horror. If I have committed an additional crime, punish me; but if you will allow that ever since the day of my birth my fate has been sad, bitter, and lamentable, then pity me."—"But your mother?" asked the president.

"My mother thought me dead; she is not guilty. I did not even wish to know her name, nor do I know it." Just then a piercing cry, ending in a sob, burst from the centre of the crowd, who encircled the lady who had before fainted, and who now fell into a violent fit of hysterics. She was carried out of the hall, and in doing so, the thick veil which concealed her face dropped off, and Madame Danglars was recognised. Notwithstanding his shattered nerves, the stunning sensation in his ears, and the species of madness which turned his brain, Villefort rose as he perceived her. "The proofs! the proofs!" said the president; "remember this tissue of horrors must be supported by the clearest proofs."—"The proofs?" said Benedetto, laughing; "do you want proofs?"—"Yes."

"Well, then, look at M. de Villefort, and then ask me for proofs."

Every one turned towards the procureur du roi, who, unable to bear the universal gaze now riveted on him alone, advanced, staggering, into the midst of the tribunal, with his hair dishevelled, and his face indented with the mark of his nails. The whole assembly uttered a long murmur of astonishment. "Father!" said Benedetto, "I am asked for proofs, do you wish me to give them?"—"No, no, it is useless!" stammered M. de Villefort, in a hoarse voice; "no, it is useless!"

"How useless?" cried the president, "what do you mean?"

"I mean that I feel it impossible to struggle against this deadly weight which crushes me. Gentlemen, I know I am in the hands of an avenging God! We need no proofs; everything relating to this young man is true." A dull, gloomy silence, like that which precedes some awful phenomenon of nature, pervaded the assembly, who shuddered in dismay. "What! M. de Villefort," cried the president, "do you yield to an hallucination? What! are you no longer in possession of your senses? This strange, unexpected, terrible accusation has disordered your reason. Come, recover!"

The procureur du roi dropped his head: his teeth chattered like those of a man under a violent attack of fever, and yet he was deadly pale.

"I am in possession of all my senses, sir," he said; "my body alone suffers, as you may suppose. I acknowledge myself guilty of all the young man has brought against me, and from this hour hold myself under the authority of the procureur du roi who will succeed me."

And as he spoke these words with a hoarse, choking voice, he staggered towards the door, which was mechanically opened by a doorkeeper. The whole assembly were dumb with astonishment at the revelation and confession which had produced a catastrophe so different to that which had been expected during the last fortnight by the Parisian world.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "let them now say that drama is unnatural!"—"*Ma foi!*" said Château-Renaud, "I would rather end my career like M. de Morcerf; a pistol-shot seems quite delightful, compared with this catastrophe."

"And so he has committed murder," said Beauchamp.—"And I, too,

who thought of marrying his daughter," said Debray. "She did well to die, poor girl!"

"The sitting is adjourned, gentlemen," said the president; "fresh inquiries will be made, and the case will be tried next session by another magistrate." As for Andrea, who was as calm and more interesting than ever, he left the hall, escorted by gendarmes, who involuntarily paid him some attention. "Well, what do you think of this, my fine fellow?" asked Debray of the sergent-de-ville, slipping a louis into his hand. "There will be extenuating circumstances," he replied.

CHAPTER CXI.

EXPIATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the density of the crowd, M. de Villefort saw it open before him. There is something so awe-inspiring in great afflictions, that, even in the worst times, the first emotion of a crowd has generally been to sympathise with the sufferer in a great catastrophe. Many people have been assassinated in a tumult; but even criminals have rarely been insulted during their trial. Thus Villefort passed through the mass of spectators and officers of the Palais, and withdrew. Though he had acknowledged his guilt, he was protected by his grief. There are some situations which men understand by instinct, though their reason cannot explain them; in such cases the greatest orator is he who utters the loudest and most natural cry, which conveys a whole story to the mob. It would be difficult to describe the state of stupor in which Villefort left the Palais. Every pulse beat with feverish excitement, every nerve was strained, every vein swollen, and every part of his body seemed to suffer distinctly from the rest, thus multiplying his agony a thousandfold. Habit alone guided him through the passage; he threw aside his magisterial robe; he could not bear the weight on his shoulders. Having staggered as far as the Rue Dauphiné, he perceived his carriage, awoke his sleeping coachman by opening the door himself, threw himself on the cushions, and pointed towards the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; the carriage drove on. All the weight of his fallen fortune seemed suddenly to crush him; he could not foresee the consequences; he could not contemplate the future with the indifference of a cold murderer. One thought filled his mind; he saw the workings of a Divine hand in all that had happened. The carriage rolled rapidly. Villefort, while turning restlessly on the cushions, felt something press against him. He put out his hand to remove the object; it was a fan which Madame de Villefort had left in the carriage; this fan awakened a recollection which darted through his mind like lightning. He thought of his wife.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as though a red-hot iron were piercing his heart. During the last hour his own crime had alone been presented to his mind; now another object, not less terrible, suddenly presented itself. His wife! he had just acted the inexorable judge with her, he had condemned her to death; and she, crushed by remorse, struck with terror, covered with the shame inspired by the eloquence of *his* irreproachable virtue,—she, a poor weak woman, without help or the power of defending herself against his absolute and supreme will,—she might at that very moment, perhaps, be preparing to die! An hour had elapsed since her condemnation: at that moment, doubtless, she was recalling all her crimes to her memory; she was asking pardon for her sins; perhaps she

was even writing a letter imploring forgiveness from her virtuous husband—a forgiveness she was purchasing with her death! Villefort again groaned with anguish and despair. “Ah!” he exclaimed, “that woman became criminal only from associating with me! I carried the infection of crime with me, and she has caught it as she would the typhus-fever, the cholera, the plague! And yet I have punished her—I have dared to tell her—/ have—‘Repent and die!’ But no! she must not die, she shall live and follow me. We will flee from Paris, and go far as the earth reaches. I told her of the scaffold; oh, Heavens! I forgot that it awaits me also! How could I pronounce that word? Yes, we will fly: I will confess all to her,—I will tell her daily that I also have committed a crime!—Oh! what an alliance with the tiger and the serpent! worthy wife of such as I am! She *must* live that my infamy may diminish hers.” And Villefort dashed open the window in front of the carriage. “Faster! faster!” he cried, in a tone which electrified the coachman. The horses, impelled by fear, flew towards the house.

“Yes, yes,” repeated Villefort, as he approached his home—“yes, that woman must live, she must repent, and educate my son, the sole survivor, with the exception of the indestructible old man, of the wreck of my house. She loves him; it was for his sake she has committed these crimes. We ought never to despair of softening the heart of a mother who loves her child; she will repent; no one will know she has been guilty: the crimes which have taken place in my house, though they now occupy the public mind, will be forgotten in time; or if, indeed, a few enemies should persist in remembering them, why, then, I will add them to my guilty list. What will it signify if one, two, or three more are added? My wife and child shall escape from this gulf, carrying treasures with them; she will live and may yet be happy, since her child, in whom all her love is centred, will be with her. I shall have performed a good action, and my heart will be lighter.” And the procureur du roi breathed more freely than he had done for some time.

The carriage stopped at the door of the hotel. Villefort leaped out of the carriage, and saw his servants, surprised at his early return: he could read no other expression on their features. Neither of them spoke to him; they merely stood aside to let him pass by, as usual, nothing more. As he passed by M. Noirtier’s room, he perceived, through the half-open door, two figures; but he experienced no curiosity to know who was visiting his father; anxiety carried him on further.

“Come,” he said, as he ascended the stairs leading to his wife’s room, “nothing is changed here.” He then closed the door of the landing. “No one must disturb us,” he said; “I must speak freely to her, accuse myself, and say—” he approached the door, touched the crystal handle, which yielded to his hand. “Not locked!” he cried; “that is well.” And he entered the little room in which Edward slept; for though the child went to school during the day, his mother could not allow him to be separated from her at night. With a single glance Villefort’s eye ran through the room. “Not here,” he said; “doubtless she is in her bedroom.” He rushed towards the door; it was bolted; he stopped, shuddering. “Heloise!” he cried. He fancied he heard the sound of a piece of furniture being removed. “Heloise!” he repeated.

“Who is there?” answered the voice of her he sought. He thought that voice more feeble than usual.

“Open the door!” cried Villefort; “open, it is I!” But notwithstanding this request, notwithstanding the tone of anguish in which it was uttered,

the door remained closed. Villefort burst it open with a violent blow. At the entrance of the room which led to her boudoir, Madame de Villefort was standing erect, pale, her features contracted, and her eyes glaring horribly. "Heloïse ! Heloïse !" he said, "what is the matter ? Speak !" The young woman extended her stiff white hand towards him. "It is done, sir !" she said, with a rattling which seemed to tear her throat. "What more do you want ?" and she fell on the floor. Villefort ran to her and seized her hand, which convulsively clasped a crystal bottle with a golden stopper. Madame de Villefort was dead. Villefort, maddened with horror, stepped back to the threshold of the door, fixing his eyes on the corpse : "My son !" he exclaimed suddenly, "where is my son ?—Edward, Edward !" and he rushed out of the room, still crying, "Edward ! Edward !" The name was pronounced in such a tone of anguish that the servants ran up.

"Where is my son ?" asked Villefort ; "let him be removed from the house, that he may not see——"

"Master Edward is not downstairs, sir," replied the valet-de-chambre.

"Then he must be playing in the garden ; go and see."—"No, sir ; Madame de Villefort sent for him half an hour ago ; he went into her room, and has not been downstairs since." A cold perspiration burst out on Villefort's brow ; his legs trembled, and his brain filled with a confused maze of ideas. "In Madame de Villefort's room ?" he murmured, and slowly returned, with one hand wiping his forehead, and with the other supporting himself against the wall. To enter the room, he must again see the body of his unhappy wife. To call Edward he must re-awaken the echo of that room which now appeared like a sepulchre : to speak seemed like violating the silence of the tomb. His tongue clave to the roof of his mouth.

"Edward !" he stammered—"Edward !" The child did not answer. Where, then, could he be, if he had entered his mother's room and not since returned ? He stepped forward. The corpse of Madame de Villefort was stretched across the doorway leading to the room in which Edward must be ; those glaring eyes seemed to watch over the threshold, and the lips expressed a terrible and mysterious irony. Through the open door a portion of the boudoir was visible, containing an upright piano, and a blue satin couch. Villefort stepped forward two or three paces, and beheld his child lying—no doubt asleep on the sofa. The unhappy man uttered an exclamation of joy ; a ray of light seemed to penetrate the abyss of despair and darkness. He had only to step over the corpse, enter the boudoir, take the child in his arms, and flee far, far away.

Villefort no longer presented a type of civilised man : he more resembled a tiger wounded to death, whose teeth were broken in his last agony. He no longer feared realities, but phantoms. He leaped over the corpse as though it had been a furnace. He took the child in his arms, pressed him, shook him, called him, but the child replied not. He pressed his burning lips to the cheeks, but they were icy cold and pale ; he felt his stiffened limbs ; he pressed his hand upon the heart, but it no longer beat : the child was dead. A folded paper fell from Edward's breast. Villefort, thunderstruck, fell upon his knees ; the child dropped from his arms, and rolled on the floor by the side of its mother. He picked up the paper, and, recognising his wife's writing, ran his eyes rapidly over its contents : they were as follows :

"You know that I was a good mother, since it was for my son's sake I became criminal. A good mother cannot depart without her son."

Villefort could not believe his eyes,—he could not believe his reason ; he dragged himself towards the child's corpse, and examined it as a lioness contemplates its dead cub. Then a piercing cry escaped from his breast, and he cried, "Still the hand of God." The two victims alarmed him ; he could not bear the solitude only shared by two corpses. Until then he had been sustained by rage, by his strength of mind, by despair, by the supreme agony which led the Titans to scale the heavens, and Ajax to defy the gods. He now rose, his head bent beneath the weight of grief, and shaking his damp staring hair—he who had never felt compassion for any one determined to seek his father, that he might have some one to whom he could relate his misfortunes,—some one by whose side he might weep. He descended the little stairs with which we are acquainted, and entered Noirtier's room. The old man appeared to be listening attentively and as affectionately as his infirmities would allow to the Abbé Busoni, who looked cold and calm, as usual. Villefort, perceiving the abbé, passed his hand across his brow. He recollected the call he had made upon him after the dinner at Auteuil, and then the visit the abbé had himself paid to his house on the day of Valentine's death. "You here, sir !" he exclaimed ; "do you, then, never appear but to act as an escort to death ?"

Busoni turned round, and perceiving the excitement depicted on the magistrate's face, the savage lustre of his eyes, he understood that the scene of the assizes had been accomplished ; but beyond this he was ignorant. "I came to pray over the body of your daughter."

"And, now, why are you here ?"

"I come to tell you that you have sufficiently repaid your debt, and that from this moment I will pray to God to forgive you as I do."

"Good Heavens !" exclaimed Villefort, stepping back fearfully, "surely that is not the voice of the Abbé Busoni !"

"No !" the abbé threw off his false tonsure, shook his head, and his hair, no longer confined, fell in black masses around his manly face.

"It is the face of the Count of Monte-Cristo !" exclaimed the procureur du roi, with a haggard expression.

"You are not exactly right, M. le Procureur du Roi ; you must go farther back."—"That voice ! that voice !—where did I first hear it ?"

"You heard it for the first time at Marseilles, twenty-three years ago, the day of your marriage with Mademoiselle de Saint-Méran. Refer to your papers."—"You are not Busoni ?—you are not Monte-Cristo ? Oh, Heavens ! you are, then, some concealed, implacable, and mortal enemy ! I must have wronged you in some way at Marseilles. Oh ! woe to me !"

"Yes ; you are, indeed, right," said the count, crossing his arms over his broad chest ; "search ! search !"—"But what have I done to you ?" exclaimed Villefort, whose mind was balancing between reason and insanity, in that cloud which is neither a dream nor reality, "what have I done to you ? Tell me, then ! Speak !"

"You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death,—you killed my father—-you deprived me of liberty, of love, and happiness."

"Who are you, then ? Who are you ?"—"I am the spectre of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Château d'If. The form of the Count of Monte-Cristo was given to that spectre when he at length issued from his tomb, enriched with gold and diamonds to reconduct him to you."

"Ah ! I recognise you ! I recognise you !" exclaimed the procureur du roi ; "you are—"

Edmond Dantès !”

“Are Edmond Dantès !” cried Villefort, seizing the count by the neck, “then come here !” And he dragged Monte-Cristo up the stairs ; ignorant of what had happened, followed him in astonishment, pre-empting a new catastrophe. “Hold, Edmond Dantès !” he said, pointing to the bodies of his wife and child. “See ! are you well avenged ?” Monte-Cristo became pale at this horrible sight ; he felt he had passed the bounds of vengeance, and that he could no longer say, “God and with me.” With an expression of indescribable anguish he threw himself upon the body of the child, reopened its eyes, felt its pulse, and rushed with him into Valentine’s room, of which he double-locked the door. “My child !” cried Villefort, “he carries away the body of my child ! Oh ! curses, woe, death to you !” and he tried to follow Monte-Cristo ; but, as though in a dream, he was transfixed to the spot ; he glared as though they were starting through the sockets ; he felt the flesh on his chest, until his nails were stained with blood ; the walls of his temple swelled and boiled as though they would burst their boundary, and deluge his brain with living fire. This lasted several minutes, until the frightful overturn of reason was accomplished ; then, with a loud cry, followed by a burst of laughter, he rushed down the

stairs. After an hour afterwards, the door of Valentine’s room opened, and Monte-Cristo reappeared. Pale, with a dull eye and heavy heart, all the features of that face, usually so calm and serene, appeared overcast with grief. In his arms he held the child, whom no skill had been able to recall to life. Bending on one knee, he placed it reverently by the side of its mother, with its head upon her breast. Then rising, he went to meet a servant on the stairs, he asked,—“Where is M. de Villefort ?”

The servant, instead of answering, pointed to the garden. Monte-Cristo ran down the steps, and, advancing towards the spot designated, Villefort, encircled by his servants, with a spade in his hand, and the earth with fury. “It is not here !” he cried. “It is not here !” and he moved further on, and recommenced digging.

Monte-Cristo approached him, and said, in a low voice, with an expression almost humble,—“Sir, you have indeed lost a son ; but——” Villefort interrupted him ; he had neither listened nor heard. “Oh, I did it !” he cried ; “you may pretend he is not here, but I *will* find him, though I dig for ever !” Monte-Cristo drew back in horror. “Oh !”

“he is mad !” And as though he feared that the walls of the old house would crumble around him, he rushed into the street, for some time doubting whether he had the right to do as he had done. Enough of this,—enough of this,” he cried, “let me save the last.” Leaving his house, he met Morrel, who wandered about like a ghost. “Save yourself, Maximilian,” he said, with a smile ; “we leave Paris to you.”—“Have you nothing more to do there ?” asked Morrel. “I replied Monte-Cristo ; “God grant I may not have done too much already.”

The next day they indeed left, accompanied alone by Baptistin. Haydée and Ali, and Bertuccio remained with Noirtier.

CHAPTER CXII.

THE DEPARTURE.

THE recent events formed the theme of conversation throughout all Paris. Emmanuel and his wife conversed with natural astonishment in their little apartment in the Rue Meslay upon the three successive, sudden, and most unexpected catastrophes of Morcerf, Danglars, and Villefort. Maximilian, who was paying them a visit, listened to their conversation, or rather was present at it, plunged in his accustomed state of apathy. "Indeed," said Julie, "might we not almost fancy, Emmanuel, that those people, so rich, so happy but yesterday, had forgotten, in their prosperity, that an evil genius hovered over them, who, like the wicked fairies in Perrault's stories, presenting themselves, unbidden, at some wedding or baptism, has appeared all at once to revenge himself for their fatal neglect?"—"What a dire misfortune!" said Emmanuel, thinking of Morcerf and Danglars.

"What dreadful sufferings!" said Julie, remembering Valentine, but whom, with a delicacy natural to women, she did not name before her brother.

"If the Supreme Being has directed the fatal blow," said Emmanuel, "it must be that He in His great goodness has perceived nothing in the past lives of these people to merit mitigation of their awful punishment."

"Do you not form a very rash judgment, Emmanuel?" said Julie. "When my father, with a pistol in his hand, was once on the point of committing suicide, had any one then said, 'This man deserves his misery,' would not that person have been deceived?"

"Yes; but your father was not allowed to fall. A being was commissioned to arrest the fatal hand of Death about to descend on him."

Emmanuel had scarcely uttered these words, when the sound of the bell was heard, the well-known signal given by the porter that a visitor had arrived. Nearly at the same instant, the door of the room was opened, and the Count of Monte-Cristo appeared on the threshold. The young people uttered a cry of joy, while Maximilian raised his head, but let it fall again immediately. "Maximilian," said the count, without appearing to notice the different impressions which his presence produced on the little circle, "I come to seek you."

"To seek me?" repeated Morrel, as if awakening from a dream.

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "has it not been agreed that I should take you with me, and did I not tell you yesterday to prepare for departure?"

"I am ready," said Maximilian; "I came expressly to wish them farewell."

"Whither are you going, count?" asked Julie.

"In the first instance to Marseilles, madame."

"To Marseilles!" exclaimed the young couple.

"Yes, and I take your brother with me."—"Oh! count," said Julie, "will you restore him to us cured of his melancholy?" Morrel turned away to conceal the confusion of his countenance. "You perceive, then, that he is not happy?" said the count. "Yes," replied the young woman; "and I fear much that he finds our home but a dull one."

"I will undertake to divert him," replied the count.

"I am ready to accompany you, sir," said Maximilian. "Adieu, my kind friends! Emmanuel! Julie! Farewell!"—"How, farewell?" exclaimed Julie; "do you leave us thus, so suddenly, without any preparations for your journey, without even a passport?"

"Needless delays but increase the grief of parting," said Monte Cristo "and Maximilian has doubtless provided himself with everything requisite ; at least, I advised him to do so."

"I have a passport, and my clothes are ready packed," said Morrel, in his tranquil but mournful manner.

"Good !" said Monte-Cristo, smiling ; "in these prompt arrangements we recognise the order of a well-disciplined soldier."

"And you quit us thus ?" said Julie, "at a moment's warning ; you do not give us a day—no, not even an hour before your departure ?"

"My carriage is at the door, madame ; and I must be in Rome in five days."

"But does Maximilian go to Rome ?" exclaimed Emmanuel.

"I am going wherever it may please the count to lead me," said Morrel, with a smile full of grief ; "I am devoted to him for the next month."—

"Oh ! Heavens ! how strangely he expresses himself, count !" said Julie.

"Maximilian accompanies *me*," said the count, in his kindest and most persuasive manner ; "therefore do not make yourself uneasy on your brother's account."—"Once more farewell, my dear sister ; Emmanuel, adieu !" Morrel repeated.

"His carelessness and indifference touch me to the heart," said Julie.

"Oh ! Maximilian, Maximilian, you are certainly concealing something from us."—"Pshaw !" said Monte-Cristo, "you will see him return to you gay, smiling, and joyful."

Maximilian cast a look of disdain, almost of anger, on the count.

"We must leave you," said Monte-Cristo.

"Before you quit us, count," said Julie, "will you permit us to express to you all that the other day——"

"Madame," interrupted the count, taking her two hands in his, "all that you could say in words would never express that which I read in your eyes ; the thoughts of your heart are fully understood by mine. Like benefactors in romances, I should have left you without seeing you again ; but that would have been a virtue beyond my strength, because I am a weak and vain man, fond of the tender, kind, and thankful glances of my fellow creatures. On the eve of departure, I carry my egotism so far as to say, 'Do not forget me, my kind friends, for probably you will never see me again.'"—"Never see you again !" exclaimed Emmanuel, whilst two large tears rolled down Julie's cheeks, "never behold you again ! It is not a man then, but some angel, that leaves us, and this angel is on the point of returning to heaven after having appeared on earth to do good."

"Say not so," quickly returned Monte-Cristo,— "say not so, my friends ; angels never err, celestial beings remain where they wish to be : fate is not more powerful than they ; it is they who, on the contrary, overcome fate. No ! Emmanuel, I am but a man, and your admiration is as unmerited as your words are sacrilegious." And pressing his lips on the hand of Julie, who rushed into his arms, he extended his other hand to Emmanuel ; then tearing himself from this house, the abode of peace and happiness, he made a sign to Maximilian, who followed him passively with the indifference which was perceptible in him ever since the death of Valentine had so stunned him. "Restore my brother to peace and happiness," whispered Julie to Monte-Cristo. And the count pressed her hand in reply, as he had done eleven years before on the staircase leading to Morrel's study.

"You still confide, then, in Sinbad the Sailor ?" asked he, smiling.

"Oh ! yes," was the ready answer.

"Well, then, sleep in peace, and put your trust in the Lord." As we have before said, the postchaise was waiting ; four powerful horses were already pawing the ground with impatience, whilst at the foot of the steps, Ali, his face bathed in perspiration, and apparently just arrived from a long walk, was standing. "Well," asked the count in Arabic, "have you been to the old man's?" Ali made a sign in the affirmative.

"And have you placed the letter before him, as I ordered you to do?"

The slave respectfully signalized that he had. "And what did he say, or rather do?" Ali placed himself in the light, so that his master might see him distinctly, and then imitating in his intelligent manner the countenance of the old man, he closed his eyes, as Noirtier was in the custom of doing when saying "yes."

"Good ! he accepts," said Monte-Cristo. "Now let us go."

These words had scarcely escaped him, when the carriage was on its road ; and the feet of the horses struck a shower of sparks from the pavement. Maximilian settled himself in his corner without uttering a word. Half an hour had fled when the carriage stopped suddenly ; the count had just pulled the silken check-string, which was fastened to Ali's finger. The Nubian immediately descended, and opened the carriage door. It was a lovely starlight night—they had just reached the top of the hill Villejoie, the platform from whence Paris, like some dark sea, is seen to agitate its millions of lights, resembling phosphoric waves,—waves indeed, more noisy, more passionate, more changeable, more furious, more greedy, than those of the tempestuous ocean,—waves which never lie calm, like those of the vast sea,—waves ever destructive, ever foaming, and ever restless. The count remained alone, and on a sign from his hand, the carriage advanced some steps. He contemplated for some time, with his arms crossed, the vast city. When he had fixed his piercing look on this modern Babylon, which equally engages the contemplation of the religious enthusiast, the materialist, and the scoffer,—"*Great city*," murmured he, inclining his head, and joining his hands as if in prayer, "less than six months have elapsed since first I entered thy gates. I believe that the Spirit of God led my steps to thee, and that He also enables me to quit thee in triumph ; the secret cause of my presence within thy walls I have confided alone to Him, who only has had the power to read my heart. God only knows that I retire from thee without pride or hatred, but not without many regrets : He only knows that the power confided to me has never been made subservient to my personal good or to any useless cause. Oh ! great city ! it is in thy palpitating bosom that I have found that which I sought ; like a patient miner, I have dug deep into thy very entrails to root out evil thence ; now my work is accomplished, my mission is terminated, now thou canst neither afford me pain nor pleasure. Adieu, Paris ! adieu !"

His look wandered over the vast plain like that of some genius of the night ; he passed his hand over his brow, and, getting into the carriage, the door was closed on him, and it quickly disappeared on the other side of the hill in a cloud of dust and noise.

CHAPTER CXIII.

THE HOUSE IN THE ALLEES DE MEHLAN.

TEN leagues were passed without a single word being pronounced. Morrel was dreaming, and Monte-Cristo was looking at the dreamer.

"Morrel," said the count to him at length, "do you repent having followed me?"—"No, count; but to leave Paris——"

"If I thought happiness might await you in Paris, Morrel, I would have left you there."—"Valentine reposes within the walls of Paris, and to leave Paris is like losing her a second time."

"Maximilian," said the count, "the friends that we have lost do not repose in the bosom of the earth, but are buried deep in our hearts; and it has been thus ordained, that we may always be accompanied by them. I have two friends, who in this way never depart from me; the one who gave me being, and the other who conferred knowledge and intelligence on me. Their spirits live in me. I consult them when doubtful, and if I ever do any good, it is to their good counsels that I am indebted. Listen to the voice of your heart, Morrel, and ask it whether you ought to preserve this melancholy exterior towards me."—"My friend," said Maximilian, "the voice of my heart is very sorrowful, and points out the future in most unhappy colours."

"It is ever thus that weakened minds see everything as through a black veil; the soul forms its own horizons; your soul is darkened, and consequently the sky of the future appears stormy and unpromising."

"That may possibly be true," said Maximilian; and he again subsided into his thoughtful mood.

The journey was performed with that marvellous rapidity which the unlimited power of the count ever commanded, towns fled from them like shadows on their path, and trees shaken by the first winds of autumn seemed like giants madly rushing on to meet them, and retreating as rapidly when once reached. The following morning they arrived at Châlons, where the count's steamboat waited for them; without an instant being lost, the carriage was placed on board, and the two travellers embarked without delay. The boat was built for speed; her two paddle-wheels resembled two wings with which she skimmed the water like a bird. Morrel was not insensible to that sensation of delight which is generally experienced in passing rapidly through the air, and the wind, which occasionally raised the hair from his forehead, seemed on the point of dispelling momentarily the clouds collected there. As the distance increased between the travellers and Paris, and almost superhuman serenity appeared to surround the count, he might have been taken for an exile about to revisit his native land. Ere long Marseilles presented herself to view. Marseilles, full of life and energy,—Marseilles, the younger sister of Tyre and Carthage, that has succeeded to them in the empire of the Mediterranean,—Marseilles, that with age increases in vigour and strength,—Marseilles was seen. Powerful memories were stirred within them by the sight of that round tower, that Fort Saint-Nicolas, that port with its quays of brick, where they had both gambolled as children; and it was with one accord that they stopped on the Cannebière. A vessel was setting sail for Algiers, on board of which the bustle usually attending departure prevailed. The passengers and their relations crowded on the deck, friends taking a tender, but sorrowful leave of each other, some weeping, others noisy in their grief, formed a spectacle, exciting even to those who witnessed similar ones daily, but which had not the power to disturb the current of thought that had taken possession of the mind of Maximilian from the moment he had set foot on the broad pavement of the quay.

"Here," said he, leaning heavily on the arm of Monte-Cristo,—"*here* is the spot where my father stopped, when the *Pharaon* entered the port; it was here that the good old man whom you saved from death and dis-

honour, threw himself into my arms. I yet feel his warm tears on my face, and his were not the only tears shed, for many who witnessed our meeting wept also." Monte-Cristo gently smiled and said,—“I was there ;” at the same time pointing to the corner of a street. As he spoke, and in the very direction he indicated, a groan, expressive of bitter grief, was heard ; and a woman was seen waving her hand to a passenger on board the vessel about to sail. Monte-Cristo looked at her with an emotion that must have been remarked by Morrel had not his eyes been fixed on the vessel.

“Oh ! heavens !” exclaimed Morrel, “I do not deceive myself—that young man who is waving his hat, that youth in the uniform of a lieutenant, is Albert de Morcerf !”

“Yes,” said Monte-Cristo, “I recognised him.”—“How so ?—you were looking the other way.” The count smiled, as he was in the habit of doing when he did not want to make any reply, and he again turned his looks towards the veiled female, who soon disappeared at the corner of the street. Turning to his friend,—“Dear Maximilian,” said the count, “have you nothing to do in this land ?”—“I have to weep over the grave of my father,” replied Morrel, in a broken voice.

“Well, then, go,—wait for me there, and I will soon join you.”

“You leave me, then ?”—“Yes ; I also have a pious visit to pay.”

Morrel allowed his hand to fall into that which the count extended to him ; then with an inexpressible melancholy inclination of the head he quitted the count, and bent his steps to the east of the city. Monte-Cristo remained on the same spot until Maximilian was out of sight ; he then walked slowly towards the Allées de Meillan to seek out a small house with which our readers must have been familiar at the commencement of this story. It yet stood under the shade of the fine avenue of lime-trees, which forms one of the most frequent walks of the idlers of Marseilles ; covered by an immense vine, which spreads its aged and blackened branches over the stone front, burnt yellow by the ardent sun of the south. Two stone steps, worn away by the friction of the feet, led to the door, made of three planks, which, owing to their never having made acquaintance with paint or varnish, parted annually to reunite again when the damp season arrived. This house, with all its crumbling antiquity and apparent misery, was yet cheerful and picturesque, and was the same that old Dantès formerly inhabited—the only difference being that the old man occupied merely the garret, while the whole house was now placed at the command of Mercédès by the count.

The female whom the count had seen leave the ship with so much regret entered this house ; she had scarcely closed the door after her when Monte-Cristo appeared at the corner of a street, so that he found and lost her again almost at the same instant. The worn-out steps were old acquaintances of his ; he knew better than any one else how to open that weather-beaten door, with a large headed nail, which served to raise the latch within. He entered without knocking, or giving any other intimation of his presence, as if he had been the friend or the master of the place. At the end of a passage, paved with bricks, was seen a little garden, bathed in sunshine, and rich in warmth and light—it was in this garden that Mercédès found in the place indicated by the count, the sum of money which he, through a sense of delicacy, intimated had been placed there four-and-twenty years previously. The trees of the garden were easily seen from the steps of the street-door. Monte-Cristo, on stepping into the house, heard a sigh, almost resembling a deep sob ; he looked in the

direction whence it came, and there, under an arbour of Virginian jessamine, with its thick foliage, and beautiful long purple flowers, he perceived Mercédès seated, with her head bowed, and weeping bitterly. She had raised her veil, and with her face hidden by her hands, was giving free scope to those sighs and tears which had been so long restrained by the presence of her son. Monte-Cristo advanced a few paces, which were heard on the gravel. Mercédès raised her head, and uttered a cry of terror on beholding a man before her.

"Madame," said the count, "it is no longer in my power to restore you to happiness, but I offer you consolation; will you deign to accept it as coming from a friend?"—"I am, indeed, most wretched," replied Mercédès. "Alone in the world, I had but my son, and he has left me!"

"He possesses a noble heart, madame," replied the count, "and he has acted rightly. He feels that every man owes a tribute to his country; some contribute their talents, others their industry; those devote their blood, these their nightly labours, to the same cause. Had he remained with you, his life must have become a hateful burden, nor would he have participated in your griefs. He will increase in strength and honour by struggling with adversity, which he will convert into prosperity. Leave him to build up the future for you, and I venture to say you will confide it to safe hands."—"Oh!" replied the wretched woman, mournfully shaking her head, "the prosperity of which you speak, and which, from the bottom of my heart, I pray God in His mercy to grant him, I can never enjoy. The bitter cup of adversity has been drained by me to the very dregs, and I feel that the grave is not far distant. You have acted kindly, count, in bringing me back to the place where I have enjoyed so much bliss. I ought to meet death on the same spot where happiness was once all my own."

"Alas!" said Monte-Cristo, "your words sear and embitter my heart, the more so as you have every reason to hate me. I have been the cause of all your misfortunes; but why do you pity, instead of blame me? You render me still more unhappy—"

"Hate you, blame you—*you*, Edmond! Hate—reproach the man that has spared my son's life! For was it not your fatal and sanguinary intention to destroy that son of whom M. de Morcerf was so proud? Oh, look at me well, and discover, if you can, even the semblance of a reproach in me." The count looked up, and fixed his eyes on Mercédès, who, partly rising from her seat, extended both her hands towards him. "Oh, look at me," continued she, with a feeling of profound melancholy; "my eyes no longer dazzle by their brilliancy, for the time has long fled since I used to smile on Edmond Dantès, who anxiously looked out for me from the window of yonder garret, then inhabited by his old father. Years of grief have created an abyss between those days and the present. I neither reproach you nor hate you, my friend! Oh, no, Edmond, it is myself that I blame, myself that I hate! Oh, miserable creature that I am!" cried she, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven. "I once possessed piety, innocence, and love, the three ingredients of the happiness of angels, and now what am I?" Monte-Cristo approached her, and silently took her hand. "No," said she, withdrawing it gently—"no, my friend, touch me not. You have spared me, yet of all those who have fallen under your vengeance I was the most guilty. They were influenced by hatred, by avarice, and by self-love; but I was base, and, for want of courage, acted against my judgment. Nay, do not press my hand, Edmond; you are thinking of some kind expression, I am sure, to console me, but do not

bestow it on me, for I am no longer worthy of kindness. See" (and she exposed her face completely to view)—"see, misfortune has silvered my hair, my eyes have shed so many tears that they are encircled by a rim of purple, and my brow is wrinkled. You, Edmond, on the contrary, you are still young, handsome, dignified; it is because you have never doubted the mercy of God, and He has supported and strengthened you in all your trials."

As Mercédès spoke, the tears chased each other down her wan cheeks; the unhappy woman's heart was breaking, as memory recalled the changeable events of her life. Monte-Cristo, however, took her hand and imprinted a kiss on it; but she herself felt that it was with no greater warmth than he would have respectfully bestowed one on the hand of some marble statue of a saint. "It often happens," continued she, "that a first fault destroys the prospects of a whole life. I believed you dead; why did I survive you? What good has it done me to mourn for you eternally in the secret recesses of my heart?—only to make a woman of nine-and-thirty look like one fifty years of age. Why, having recognised you, and I the only one to do so—why was I able to save my son alone? Ought I not also to have rescued the man that I had accepted for a husband, guilty though he were? Yet I let him die! What do I say? Oh, merciful heavens! was I not accessory to his death by my supine insensibility, by my contempt for him, not remembering, or not willing to remember, that it was for my sake he had become a traitor and a perjurer? In what am I benefited by accompanying my son so far, since I now abandon him, and allow him to depart alone to the baneful climate of Africa? Oh, I have been base, cowardly, I tell you; I have abjured my affections, and, like all renegades, I am of evil omen to those who surround me!"

"No, Mercédès," said Monte-Cristo, "no; you judge yourself with too much severity. You are a noble-minded woman, and it was your grief that disarmed me. Still, I was but an agent, led on by an invisible and offended Deity, who chose not to withhold the fatal blow that I was destined to hurl. I take that God to witness, at whose feet I have prostrated myself daily for the last ten years, that I would have sacrificed my life to you, and, with my life, the projects that were indissolubly linked with it. But—and I say it with some pride, Mercédès—God required me, and I lived. Examine the past and the present, and endeavour to dive into futurity, and then say whether I am not a Divine instrument. The most dreadful misfortunes, the most frightful sufferings, the abandonment of all those who loved me, the persecution of those who did not know me, formed the trials of my youth; when suddenly, from captivity, solitude, misery, I was restored to light and liberty, and became the possessor of a fortune so brilliant, so unbounded, so unheard-of, that I must have been blind not to be conscious that God had endowed me with it to work out His own great designs. From that time I viewed this fortune as confided to me for a particular purpose. Not a thought was given to a life which you once, Mercédès, had the power to render blissful; not one hour of peaceful calm was mine, but I felt myself driven on like an exterminating angel. Like those adventurous captains about to embark on some enterprise full of danger, I laid in my provisions, I loaded my arms, I collected every means of attack and defence; I inured my body to the most violent exercises, my soul to the bitterest trials; I taught my arm to slay, my eyes to behold excruciating sufferings, and my mouth to smile at the most horrid spectacles. From good-natured, confident, and forgiving, I became revengeful, cunning, and wicked, or rather, immovable as fate. Then I launched out

into the path that was opened to me : I overcame every obstacle, and reached the goal ; but woe to those who met me in my career !”

“Enough !” said Mercédès, “enough, Edmond ! Believe me that she who alone recognised you has been the only one to comprehend you ; and had she crossed your path, and you had crushed her like a frail glass, still, Edmond, still she must have admired you ! Like the gulf between me and the past, there is an abyss between you, Edmond, and the rest of mankind ; and I tell you freely that the comparison I draw between you and other men will ever be one of my greatest tortures. No, there is nothing in the world to resemble you in worth and goodness ! But we must say farewell, Edmond, and let us part.”——“Before I leave you, Mercédès, have you no request to make ?” said the count.

“I desire but one thing in this world, Edmond—the happiness of my son.”——“Pray to the Almighty to spare his life, and I will take upon myself to promote his happiness.”

“Thanks, thanks, Edmond !”

“But have you no request to make for yourself, Mercédès ?”

“For myself I want nothing. I live, as it were, between two graves. The one that of Edmond Dantès, lost to me long, long since. He had my love ! That word ill becomes my faded lip now, but it is a memory dear to my heart, and one that I would not lose for all that the world contains. The other grave is that of the man who met his death from the hand of Edmond Dantès. I approve of the deed, but I must pray for the dead.”

“Yes, your son shall be happy, Mercédès,” repeated the count.

“Then I shall enjoy as much happiness as this world can possibly confer.”——“But what are your intentions ?”

“To say that I shall live here, like the Mercédès of other times, gaining my bread by labour, would not be true, nor would you believe me. I have no longer the strength to do anything but to spend my days in prayer. However, I shall have no occasion to work, for the little sum of money buried by you, and which I found in the place you mentioned, will be sufficient to maintain me. Rumour will probably be busy respecting me, my occupations, my manner of living—that will signify but little.”——“Mercédès,” said the count, “I do not say it to blame you, but you made an unnecessary sacrifice in relinquishing the whole of the fortune amassed by M. de Morcerf ; half of it, at least, by right belonged to you, in virtue of your vigilance and economy.”

“I perceive what you are intending to propose to me ; but I cannot accept it, Edmond—my son would not permit it.”——“Nothing shall be done without the full approbation of Albert de Morcerf. I will make myself acquainted with his intentions, and will submit to them. But if he be willing to accept my offers, will you oppose them ?”

“You well know, Edmond, that I am no longer a reasoning creature ; I have no will, unless it be the will never to decide. I have been so overwhelmed by the many storms that have broken over my head, that I am become passive in the hands of the Almighty, like a sparrow in the talons of an eagle. I live, because it is not ordained for me to die. If succour be sent to me, I will accept it.”——“Ah, madame,” said Monte-Cristo, “you should not talk thus ! It is not so we should evince our resignation to the will of heaven ; on the contrary, we are all free agents.”

“Alas !” exclaimed Mercédès, “if it were so, if I possessed free-will, but without the power to render that will efficacious, it would drive me to despair.” Monte-Cristo dropped his head and shrank from the vehemence of her grief. “Will you not even say you will see me again ?” he asked.

CHAPTER C

THE PAST.

THE count departed with a sad heart from Mercédès, probably never to behold her again. In Edward a great change had taken place in the summit of his vengeance by a long and of doubt on the other side of the mountain. A satisfaction which had just taken place between him and his father had awakened so many recollections in his heart of his combat with them. A man of the count's temper indulges in that melancholy which can exist only in the destruction of superior ones. He thought he had made calculations if he now found cause to blame

"I cannot have deceived myself," he said in a false light. What !" he continued, "a path?—can the end which I proposed be a have sufficed to prove to an architect that founded all his hopes was an impossible, if ing? I cannot reconcile myself to this idea reason why I am now dissatisfied is, that of the past. The past, like the country thus indistinct as we advance. My position is in a dream : he feels the wound, though he ceived it. Come, then, thou regenerate man thou awakened sleeper, thou all-powerful lionaire ! once again review thy past life o revisit the scenes where fate and misfortune received thee ; too many diamonds, too m reflected by the mirror in which Monte-C

boatman hoping for a good fare. The weather was magnificent, and the excursion a treat. The sun, red and flaming, was sinking into the water, which embraced it as it approached. The sea, smooth as crystal, was now and then disturbed by the leaping of fish, which, pursued by some unseen enemy, sought for safety in another element ; while, on the extreme verge of the horizon, might be seen the fishermen's boats white and graceful as the sea-gull, or the merchant vessels bound for Corsica or Spain.

But notwithstanding that serene sky, those graceful boats, and the golden light in which the whole scene was bathed, the Count of Monte-Cristo, wrapped in his cloak, could think only of this terrible voyage, the details of which were, one by one, recalled to his memory. The solitary light burning at the C atalans ; that first sight of the Chateau d'If, which told him whither they were leading him ; the struggle with the gendarmes when he wished to throw himself overboard ; his despair when he found himself vanquished, and the cold sensation of the end of the carbine touching his forehead—all these were brought before him in vivid and frightful reality. Like those streams which the heat of the summer has dried up, and which, after the autumnal storms, gradually begin oozing drop by drop, so did the count feel his heart gradually fill with the gall which formerly nearly overwhelmed that of Edmond Dant s. Henceforth he no longer beheld the clear sky, the graceful barks, the ardent light ; the sky appeared hung in black, and the gigantic structure of the Chateau d'If seemed like the phantom of a mortal enemy. As they reached the shore, the count instinctively shrunk to the extreme end of the boat, and the owner was obliged to call out, in his sweetest tone of voice, "Sir, we have reached the shore."

Monte-Cristo remembered that on that very spot, on the same rock, he had been violently dragged by the guards, who forced him to ascend the slope at the points of their bayonets. The journey had seemed very long to Dant s, but Monte-Cristo found it equally short. Each stroke of the oar seemed to reawaken a new crowd of ideas, which sprang up with the froth of the sea.

There had been no prisoners confined in the Chateau d'If since the revolution of July ; it was only inhabited by a guard placed for the prevention of smuggling. A concierge waited at the door to exhibit this monument of curiosity to visitors, once a scene of terror. The count inquired whether any of the ancient gaolers were still there ; but they had all been pensioned, or had passed on to some other employment. The concierge who conducted him had only been there since 1830. He visited his own dungeon. He again beheld the dull light vainly endeavouring to penetrate the narrow opening. His eyes rested upon the spot where his bed, since then removed, had stood, and, behind the bed, the new stones indicated where the breach made by the Abb  Faria had been. Monte-Cristo felt his limbs tremble ; he seated himself upon a log of wood.

"Are there any stories connected with this prison besides the one relating to the poisoning of Mirabeau?" asked the count ; "are there any traditions respecting these dismal abodes, in which it is difficult to believe men can ever have imprisoned their fellow-creatures?"

"Yes, sir ; indeed, the gaoler Antoine told me one connected with this very dungeon."

Monte-Cristo shuddered ; Antoine had been his gaoler. He had almost forgotten his name and face, but on hearing the former pronounced, memory recalled his person as he used to see it, his face encircled by a beard,

wearing a brown jacket, with the bunch of keys, the jingling of which he still seemed to hear. The count turned round, and fancied he saw him in the corridor, rendered still darker by the torch carried by the concierge. "Would you like to hear the story, sir?"—"Yes, relate it," said Monte-Cristo, pressing his hand to his heart to still its violent beatings: he felt afraid of hearing his own history.

"This dungeon," said the concierge, "was, it appears, some time ago occupied by a very dangerous prisoner, the more so since he was full of industry. Another person was confined in the Château at the same time, but he was not wicked, he was only a poor mad priest."—"Ah, indeed!—mad!" repeated Monte-Cristo; "and what was his mania?"

"He offered millions to any one who would set him at liberty."

Monte-Cristo raised his eyes, but he could not see the heavens; there was a stone veil between him and the firmament. He thought that there had been no less thick a veil before the eyes of those to whom Faria offered the treasures. "Could the prisoners see each other?" he asked.

"Oh, no, sir, it was expressly forbidden; but they eluded the vigilance of the guards, and made a passage from one dungeon to the other."

"And which of them made this passage?"

"Oh, it must have been the young man, certainly, for he was strong and industrious, while the abbé was aged and weak; besides, his mind was too vacillating to allow him to carry out an idea."

"Blind fools!" murmured the count.

"However, be that as it may, the young man made a passage, how, or by what means, no one knows; but he made it, and there is the trace yet remaining of the proof. Do you see it?" and the man held the torch to the wall.

"Ah! yes; truly," said the count, in a voice hoarse from emotion.

"The result was, the two men communicated together; how long they did so, nobody knows. One day the old man fell ill and died. Now guess what the young one did?"—"Tell me."

"He carried off the corpse, which he placed in his own bed with its face to the wall; then he entered the empty dungeon, closed the entrance, and slid himself into the sack which had contained the dead body. Did you ever hear of such an idea?" Monte-Cristo closed his eyes, and seemed again to experience all the sensations he had felt when the coarse canvas, yet moist with the cold dews of death, had touched his face. The gaoles continued: "Now this was his project: he fancied they buried the dead at the Château d'If, and imagining they would not expend much labour on the grave of a prisoner, he calculated on raising the earth with his shovellers; but, unfortunately, their arrangements at the Château frustrated his projects: they never buried their dead; they merely attached a heavy cannon-ball to the feet, and then threw them into the sea. This is what was done. The young man was thrown from the top of the rock; the corpse was found on the bed next day, and the whole truth was guessed: for the men who performed the office then mentioned what they had not dared to speak of before, namely, that at the moment the corpse was thrown into the deep, they heard a shriek, which was almost immediately stifled by the water in which it disappeared." The count breathed with difficulty; the cold drops ran down his forehead, and his heart was full of anguish.

"No," he muttered, "the doubt I felt was but the commencement of forgetfulness; but here the wound reopens, and the heart again thirsts

for vengeance. And the prisoner," he continued aloud, "was he ever heard of afterwards?"—"Oh! no; of course not. You can understand that one of two things must have happened: he must either have fallen flat, in which case the blow, from a height of ninety feet, must have killed him instantly, or he must have fallen upright, and then the weight would have dragged him to the bottom, where he remained—poor fellow!"

"Then you pity him?" said the count.

"*Ma foi!* yes; though he was in his own element."

"What do you mean?"—"A report ran that he had been a naval officer, who had been confined for plotting with the Buonapartists."

"Truth!" muttered the count, "thou art made to rise above the waves and flames! Thus the poor sailor lives in the recollection of those who narrate his history; his terrible story is recited in the chimney-corner, and a shudder is felt at the description of his transit through the air to be swallowed by the deep." Then, the count added aloud, "Was his name ever known?"—"Oh! yes; but only as No. 34."

"Oh! Villefort, Villefort!" murmured the count, "this scene must often have haunted thy sleepless hours!"

"Do you wish to see anything more, sir?" said the concierge.

"Yes; especially if you will show me the poor abbé's room."

"Ah! No. 27."—"Yes; No. 27," repeated the count, who seemed to hear the voice of the abbé answering him in those very words through the wall when asked his name.—"Come, sir."—"Wait," said Monte-Cristo, "I wish to take one final glance around this room."

"This is fortunate," said the guide; "I have forgotten the other key."

"Go and fetch it."—"I will leave you the torch, sir."

"No, take it away; I can see in the dark."

"Why, you are like No. 34. They said he was so accustomed to darkness, that he could see a pin in the darkest corner of his dungeon."

"He spent fourteen years to arrive at that," muttered the count.

The guide carried away the torch. The count had spoken correctly. Scarcely had a few seconds elapsed, ere he saw everything as distinctly as by daylight. Then he looked around him, and really recognised his dungeon.

"Yes," he said, "there is the stone upon which I used to sit; there is the impression made by my shoulders on the wall; there is the mark of my blood made when I, one day, dashed my head against the wall. Oh! those figures! how well I remember them! I made them one day to calculate the age of my father, that I might know whether I should find him still living, and that of Mercédès, to know if I should find her still free. After finishing that calculation, I had a minute's hope. I did not reckon upon hunger and infidelity!" and a bitter laugh escaped from the count. He saw in fancy the burial of his father, and the marriage of Mercédès. On the other side of the dungeon, he perceived an inscription, the white letters of which were still visible on the green wall. "'O God!' he read, "'preserve my memory!' Oh, yes!" he cried, "that was my only prayer at last; I no longer begged for liberty, but memory; I dreaded to become mad and forgetful. O God! Thou hast preserved my memory; I thank Thee! I thank Thee!" At this moment the light of the torch was reflected on the wall; the guide was advancing; Monte-Cristo went to meet him.

"Follow me, sir;" and, without ascending the stairs, the guide conducted him by a subterraneous passage to another entrance. There, again, Monte-

Cristo was assailed by a crowd of thoughts. The first thing that met his eye was the meridian, drawn by the abbé on the wall, by which he calculated the time; then he saw the remains of the bed on which the poor prisoner had died. The sight of this, instead of exciting the anguish experienced by the count in the dungeon, filled his heart with a soft and grateful sentiment, and tears fell from his eyes.

"This is where the mad abbé was kept, sir, and that is where the young man entered," and the guide pointed to the opening, which had remained unclosed. "From the appearance of the stone," he continued, "a learned gentleman discovered that the prisoners might have communicated together for ten years. Poor things! they must have been ten weary years."

Dantès took some louis from his pocket, and gave them to the man who had twice unconsciously pitied him. The guide took them, thinking them merely a few pieces of little value; but the light of the torch revealed their true worth. "Sir," he said, "you have made a mistake; you have given me gold."—"I know it." The concierge looked upon the count with surprise. "Sir," he cried, scarcely able to believe his good fortune—"sir, I cannot understand your generosity!"

"Oh! it is very simple, my good fellow; I have been a sailor, and your story touched me more than it would others."

"Then, sir, since you are so liberal, I ought to offer you something."

"What have you to offer to me, my friend? Shells? Straw-work? Thank you!"

"No, sir, neither of those: something connected with this story."

"Really! What is it?"—"Listen," said the guide; "I said to myself, 'Something is always left in a cell inhabited by one prisoner for fifteen years; so I began to sound the wall.'—"Ah!" cried Monte-Cristo, remembering the two hiding-places of the abbé.

"After some search, I discovered a hollow sound against the head of the bed, and under the hearth."—"Yes," said the count, "yes."

"I raised the stones, and found——"

"A rope-ladder and some tools?"

"How do you know that?" asked the guide, in astonishment.

"I do not know—I only guess it, because these sort of things are generally found in prisoners' cells."

"Yes, sir, a rope-ladder and tools."

"And have you them yet?"—"No, sir; I sold them to visitors, who considered them great curiosities; but I have still something left."

"What is it?" asked the count, impatiently.

"A sort of book, written upon strips of cloth."—"Go and fetch it, my good fellow; and if it be what I hope, rest satisfied."

"I will run for it, sir," and the guide went out. Then the count knelt down by the side of the bed, which death had converted into an altar. "Oh, second father!" he exclaimed, "thou who hast given me liberty, knowledge, riches; thou who, like beings of a superior order to ourselves, couldst understand the science of good and evil; if, in the depths of the tomb, there still remain something within us which can respond to the voice of those who are left on earth; if, after death, the soul ever revisit the places where we have lived and suffered, then, noble heart!—sublime soul! then I conjure thee, by the paternal love thou didst bear me, by the filial obedience I vowed to thee, grant me some sign, some revelation! Remove from me the remains of a doubt which, if it changed not to con-

n, must become remorse !" The count bowed his head, and clasped hands together.

ere, sir," said a voice behind him.

nte-Cristo shuddered, and rose. The concierge held out the strips upon which the Abbé Faria had spread the stores of his mind. Manuscript was the great work by the Abbé Faria upon the kingdoms of the world. The count seized it hastily, and his eyes immediately fell upon the title-page, and he read, "'Thou shalt tear out the dragons' teeth, and trample the lions under foot, saith the Lord.'"

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "here is my answer. Thanks, father, thanks." Feeling in his pocket, he took thence a small pocket-book, which contained ten bank-notes, each of 1,000 francs.

"Here," he said, "take this pocket-book."

"Do you give it to me?"—"Yes; but only on condition that you do not open it till I am gone;" and placing the treasure he had just won in his breast, which was more valuable to him than the richest of the world, he rushed out of the passage, and, reaching his boat, cried, "To the galleys!" Then, as he departed, he fixed his eyes upon the gloomy sky. "Woe," he cried, "to those who confined me in that wretched prison; and woe to those who forgot that I was there!" As he repassed the prison walls, the count turned round, and burying his head in his cloak, murmured the name of a woman. The victory was complete; twice he had overcome his doubts. The name he pronounced, in a voice of tenderness, amounting almost to love, was that of Haydée.

Descending, the count turned towards the cemetery, where he felt sure of finding Morrel. He, too, ten years ago, had piously sought out a tomb, but he found it vainly. He, who returned to France with millions, had been unable to find the grave of his father, who had perished from hunger. He had, indeed, placed a cross over the spot, but it had fallen down, and the gravedigger had burnt it, as he did all the old wood in the churchyard.

The worthy merchant had been more fortunate. Dying in the arms of his children, he had been by them laid by the side of his wife, who had preceded him in eternity by two years. Two large slabs of marble, on which were inscribed their names, were placed on either side of a little altar, raised in, and shaded by four cypress-trees. Morrel was leaning against one of these, mechanically fixing his eyes on the graves. His was so profound, he was nearly unconscious. "Maximilian," said the count, "you should not look on the graves, but there;" and he pointed to the dead.

"The dead are everywhere," said Morrel; "did you not yourself tell me as we left Paris?"—"Maximilian," said the count, "you asked me to give you the journey to allow you to remain some days at Marseilles. Do you still wish to do so?"

"I have no wishes, count; only I fancy I could pass the time less painfully here than anywhere else."—"So much the better, for I must leave you."

"But I carry your word with me, do I not?"

"Ah, count, I shall forget it."—"No, you will not forget it, because you are a man of honour, Morrel, because you have sworn, and are about to keep your oath."

"Oh, count! have pity upon me. I am so unhappy."

"I have known a man much more unfortunate than you, Morrel."

"Impossible!"—"Alas!" said Monte-Cristo, "it is the infirmity of our nature always to believe ourselves much more unhappy than those

who groan by our sides!"—"What can be more wretched than the man who has lost all he loved and desired in the world?"

"Listen, Morrel, and pay attention to what I am about to tell you. I knew a man who like you had fixed all his hopes of happiness upon a woman. He was young, he had an old father whom he loved, a betrothed bride whom he adored. He was about to marry her, when one of those caprices of fate,—which would almost make us doubt the goodness of Providence, if that Providence did not afterwards reveal itself by proving that all is but a means of conducting to an end,—one of those caprices deprived him of his mistress, of the future of which he had dreamed (for in his blindness he forgot he could only read the present), and plunged him into a dungeon."

"Ah!" said Morrel, "one quits a dungeon in a week, a month, or a year."—"He remained there fourteen years, Morrel," said the count, placing his hand on the young man's shoulder. Maximilian shuddered.

"Fourteen years!" he muttered.—"Fourteen years!" repeated the count. "During that time he had many moments of despair. He also, Morrel, like you, considered himself the unhappiest of men."

"Well?" asked Morrel.—"Well! at the height of his despair God assisted him through human means. At first, perhaps, he did not recognise the infinite mercy of the Lord, but at last he took patience and waited. One day he miraculously left the prison, transformed, rich, powerful. His first cry was for his father; but that father was dead."

"My father, too, is dead," said Morrel.—"Yes; but your father died in your arms, happy, respected, rich, and full of years; his father died poor, despairing, almost doubtful of Providence; and when his son sought his grave ten years afterwards, his tomb had disappeared, and no one could say, 'There sleeps the father you so well loved.'"

"Oh!" exclaimed Morrel.—"He was, then, a more unhappy son than you, Morrel, for he could not even find his father's grave!"

"But then he had the woman he loved still remaining?"

"You are deceived, Morrel, that woman——"

"She was dead?"—"Worse than that: she was faithless, and had married one of the persecutors of her betrothed. You see, then, Morrel, that he was a more unhappy lover than you."

"And has he found consolation?"

"He has found calmness, at least."

"And does he ever expect to be happy?"

"He hopes so, Maximilian." The young man's head fell on his breast.

"You have my promise," he said, after a minute's pause, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo. "Only remember——"

"On the 5th of October, Morrel, I shall expect you at the island of Monte-Cristo. On the 4th a yacht will wait for you in the port of Bastia. It will be called the *Euus*. You will deliver your name to the captain, who will bring you to me. It is understood—is it not?"

"But, count, do you remember that the 5th of October——"

"Child!" replied the count, "not to know the value of a man's word! I have told you twenty times that if you wish to die on that day, I will assist you. Morrel, farewell!"—"Do you leave me?"

"Yes; I have business in Italy. I leave you alone with your misfortunes, and with hope, Maximilian."—"When do you leave?"

"Immediately; the steamer waits, and in an hour I shall be far from you. Will you accompany me to the harbour, Maximilian?"

"I am entirely yours, count." Morrel accompanied the count to the

harbour. The white steam was ascending like a plume of feathers from the black chimney. The steamer soon disappeared, and in an hour afterwards, as the count had said, was scarcely distinguishable in the horizon amidst the fogs of the night.

CHAPTER CXV.

PEPPINO.

AT the same time that the steamer disappeared behind Cape Morgiou, a man, travelling post on the road from Florence to Rome, had just passed the little town of Aquapendente. He was travelling fast enough to make a great deal of ground without becoming altogether suspicious. This man, dressed in a great-coat, or rather a surtout, a little the worse for the journey, but which exhibited the riband of the Légion d'Honneur still fresh and brilliant, a decoration which also ornamented the under coat, might be recognised, not only by these signs, but also from the accent with which he spoke to the postilion, to be a Frenchman. Another proof that he was a native of the universal country was apparent in the fact of his knowing no other Italian words than the terms used in music. "*Allegro*!" he called out to the postilions at every ascent. "*Moderato*!" he cried as they descended. And any one who has ever travelled that road, knows there are hills enough between Rome and Florence by the way of Aquapendente! These two words greatly amused the men to whom they were addressed. On reaching La Storta, the point from whence Rome is first visible, the traveller evinced none of the enthusiastic curiosity which usually leads strangers to stand up and endeavour to catch sight of the dome of St. Peter's, which may be seen long before any other object is distinguishable. No, he merely drew a pocket-book from his pocket, and took from it a paper folded in four, and after having examined it in a manner almost reverential, he said—"Good! I have it still."

The carriage entered by the Porto del Popolo, turned to the left, and stopped at the Hotel d'Espagne. Maître Pastrini, our old acquaintance, received the traveller at the door, hat in hand. The traveller alighted, ordered a good dinner, and inquired the address of the house of Thomson and French, which was immediately given to him, as it was one of the most celebrated in Rome. It was situated in the Via dei Banchi, near St. Peter's. In Rome, as everywhere else, the arrival of a post-chaise is an event. Ten young descendants of Marius and the Gracchi, barefooted, and out at elbows, with one hand resting on the hip, and the other arm gracefully curved above the head, stared at the traveller, the post-chaise, and the horses; to these were added about fifty little vagabonds from the states of his holiness, who made a collection for plunging into the Tiber at high water from the bridge of St. Angelo. Now, as these *gamins* of Rome, more fortunate than those of Paris, understand every language, more especially the French, they heard the traveller order an apartment, a dinner, and finally inquire the way to the house of Thomson and French. The result was, that when the new comer left the hotel with the cicerone, a man detached himself from the rest of the idlers, and, without having been seen by the traveller, and appearing to excite no attention from the guide, followed the stranger with as much skill as a Parisian agent of police would have used.

The Frenchman had been so impatient to reach the house of Thomson and French that he would not wait for the horses to be harnessed, but

the first desk. "Whom shall I

"The Baron Danglars,"—
opened, through which the foot
man who had followed Danglars
tinued to write for the next five m
silence, and remained perfectly n
ceased to move over the paper ;
perfectly sure of a *tête-à-tête*,—
Peppino !"

"Yes," was the laconic reply.
thing worth having about this larg

"There is no great merit due to

"You know his business here, t

"*Pardieu* ! he has come to drav

"You will know presently, my f
me false information, as you did tl

"What do you mean?—of whom
man who carried off 3,000 crowns
really had 3,000 crowns, and we fo
who you said had 30,000 livres, an

"You must have searched badly

"Luigi Vampa himself searched.
make my observations, or the Frer
out my knowing the sum." Peppi
his pocket, began to mutter a few
through the same door by which I
At the expiration of ten minutes th
nance. "Well?" asked Peppino o

"Joy, joy !—the sum is large."—

"Yes, you know the amount."

man of twenty. The cicerone reclosed the door, and sprang up by the side of the coachman. Peppino mounted the seat behind.

"Will your excellency visit St. Peter's?" asked the cicerone.

"I did not come to Rome to see," said Danglars, aloud; then he added softly, with an avaricious smile, "I came to touch!" and he tapped his pocket-book, in which he had just placed a letter.

"Then your excellency is going——"

"To the hotel."—"Casa Pastrini!" said the cicerone to the coachman, and the carriage drove rapidly on. Ten minutes afterwards the baron entered his apartment, and Peppino stationed himself on the bench outside the door of the hotel, after having whispered something in the ear of one of the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi whom we noticed at the beginning of the chapter, who immediately ran down the road leading to the Capitol at his fullest speed. Danglars was tired and sleepy; he therefore went to bed, placing his pocket-book under his pillow. Peppino had a little spare time, so he had a game of *mora* with the *facchina*, lost three crowns, and then, to console himself, drank a bottle of vin d'Orvieto.

The next morning Danglars awoke late, though he went to bed so early; he had not slept well for five or six nights, even if he had slept at all. He breakfasted heartily; and caring little, as he said, for the beauties of the Eternal City, ordered post-horses at noon. But Danglars had not reckoned upon the formalities of the police and the idleness of the posting-master. The horses only arrived at two o'clock, and the cicerone did not bring the passport till three. All these preparations had collected a number of idlers round the door of Maître Pastrini's; the descendants of Marius and the Gracchi were also not wanting. The baron walked triumphantly through the crowd, who, for the sake of gain, styled him "your excellency." As Danglars had hitherto contented himself with being called a baron, he felt rather flattered at the title of excellency, and distributed a dozen pauls amongst the *canaille*, who were ready, for twelve more, to call him "your highness."

"Which road?" asked the postilion in Italian. "The Ancona road," replied the baron. Maître Pastrini interpreted the question and answer, and the horses galloped off. Danglars intended travelling to Venice, where he would receive one part of his fortune, and then proceeding to Vienna, where he would find the rest, he meant to take up his residence in the latter town, which he had been told was a city of pleasure.

He had scarcely advanced three leagues out of Rome when daylight began to disappear. Danglars had not intended starting so late, or he would have remained; he put his head out and asked the postilion how long it would be before they reached the next town. "*Non capisco*," was the reply. Danglars bent his head, which he meant to imply, "Very well." The carriage again moved on. "I will stop at the first posting-house," said Danglars to himself.

He still felt the same self-satisfaction which he had experienced the previous evening, and which had procured him so good a night's rest. He was luxuriously stretched in a good English calèche, with double springs; he was drawn by four good horses, at full gallop; he knew the relay to be at a distance of seven leagues. What subject of meditation could present itself to the banker, so fortunately become bankrupt?

Danglars thought for ten minutes upon his wife in Paris; another ten minutes upon his daughter travelling about with Mademoiselle d'Armilly; the same period was given to his creditors, and the manner in which he

1

"Come, my friend," he said, "where are we going?"—"De imperious voice, accompanied by *dentro la testa* meant "Put in your ears in Italian. He obeyed, momentarily increasing, caused him as it was when he began his journey likely to keep a traveller awake, in Danglars. His eyes acquired the strong emotion enables them to see from being too much taxed. Before when we are alarmed, we see double we see nothing but trouble. Dangling at the right hand of the carriage."

it seemed the carriage must dash ; but it turned round, leaving behind it the mass, which was no other than one of the ramparts encircling Rome.

"Oh ! oh !" cried Danglars, "we are not returning to Rome ; then it is not justice which is pursuing me ! Gracious heavens ! another idea presents itself ; what if they should be——"

His hair stood on end. He remembered those interesting stories, so little believed in Paris, respecting Roman bandits ; he remembered the adventures that Albert de Morcerf had related when it was intended he should marry Mademoiselle Eugénie. "They are robbers, perhaps !" he muttered. Just then the carriage rolled on something harder than the gravelled road. Danglars hazarded a look on both sides of the road, and perceived monuments of a singular form ; and his mind now recalled all the details Morcerf had related, and comparing them with his own situation, he felt sure he must be on the Appian Way. On the left, in a sort of valley, he perceived a circular excavation. It was Caracalla's circle. On a word from the man who rode at the side of the carriage, it stopped. At the same time the door was opened. "*Scendi !*" exclaimed a commanding voice. Danglars instantly descended ; though he did not yet speak Italian, he understood it very well. More dead than alive, he looked around him. Four men surrounded him, besides the postilion.

"*Di quà,*" said one of the men, descending a little path leading out of the Appian Way. Danglars followed his guide without opposition, and had no occasion to turn round to see whether the three others were following him. Still it appeared as though they stopped at equal distances from one another, like sentinels. After walking for about ten minutes, during which Danglars did not exchange a single word with his guide, he found himself between a hillock and a clump of high weeds ; three men, standing silent, formed a triangle, of which he was the centre. He wished to speak, but his tongue refused to move.

"*Avanti !*" said the same sharp and imperative voice.

This time Danglars had double reason to understand ; for if the word and gesture had not explained the speaker's meaning, it was clearly expressed by the man walking behind him, who pushed him so rudely, that he struck against the guide. This guide was our friend Peppino, who dashed into the thicket of high weeds, through a path which none but lizards or polecats could have imagined to be an open road. Peppino stopped before a pit overhung by thick hedges ; the pit, half open, afforded a passage to the young man, who disappeared like the evil spirits in the fairy tales. The voice and gesture of the man who followed Danglars ordered him to do the same. There was no longer any doubt, the bankrupt was in the hands of Roman banditti. Danglars acquitted himself like a man placed between two dangerous positions, and who is rendered brave by fear. Notwithstanding his large stomach, certainly not intended to penetrate the fissures of an Italian road, he slid down like Peppino, and, closing his eyes, fell upon his feet. As he touched the ground, he opened his eyes. The path was wide, but dark. Peppino, who cared little for being recognised now he was in his own territories, struck a light, and lit a torch. Two other men descended after Danglars, forming the rear-guard, and pushing Danglars whenever he happened to stop, they arrived by a gentle declivity at the centre of a cross-road of sinister appearance. Indeed, the walls, hollowed out in sepulchres, placed one above the other, seemed, in contrast with the white stones, to open their large dark eyes, like those which we see on the faces of the dead. A sentinel struck his carbine against his left hand. "Who goes there ?" he cried.

...very well, show him to me."
pino raised his torch to Dang
might not have his eyelashes but
appearance of pale and hideous
captain, "conduct him to his bed
bed is probably one of the coffin
shall enjoy will be death from or
shade."

From the depths of the hall w
dried leaves or calf-skin the com
by Albert de Morcerf reading "C
studying the "Life of Alexander."
lowed his guide; he neither sup
possessed strength, will, power, c
him. At length, he found him:
mechanically lifted his foot five or
before him, and bending his head
a small room cut out of the rock.
dry, though situated at an im
Danglars, on beholding it, bright
God be praised!" he said; "it is
"Ecco!" said the guide, and pu
the door upon him.

A bolt grated; Danglars was a
bolt, it would have been impossibl
the garrison who held the catacom
a master whom our readers must
Vampa. Danglars, too, had reco
would not believe when Albert de
not only did he recognise him, but
confined, and which was

CHAPTER CXVI.

LUIGI VAMPA'S BILL OF FARE.

WE awake from every sleep except the one dreaded by Danglars. He awoke. To a Parisian accustomed to silken curtains, walls hung with velvet drapery, and the soft perfume of burning wood, the white smoke of which diffuses itself in graceful curves around the room, the appearance of the whitewashed cell which greeted his eyes on awaking seemed like the continuation of some disagreeable dream. But in such a situation a single moment suffices to change the strongest doubt into certainty. "Yes, yes," he murmured, "I am in the hands of the brigands of whom Albert de Morcerf spoke." His first idea was to breathe, that he might know whether he was wounded. He borrowed this from "Don Quixote," the only book he had ever read, but which he still slightly remembered.

"No," he cried, "they have not wounded, but perhaps they have robbed me!" and he thrust his hands into his pockets. They were untouched; the hundred louis he had reserved for his journey from Rome to Venice were in his trousers pocket, and in that of his great-coat he found the little note-case containing his letter of credit for 5,050,000 francs. "Singular bandits!" he exclaimed; "they have left me my purse and pocket-book. As I was saying last night, they intend me to be ransomed. Hollo! here is my watch! Let me see what time it is." Danglars' watch, one of Breguet's chefs-d'œuvre, which he had carefully wound up on the previous night, struck half-past five. Without this, Danglars would have been quite ignorant of the time, for daylight did not reach his cell. Should he demand an explanation from the bandits, or should he wait patiently for them to propose it. The last alternative seemed the most prudent, so he waited until twelve o'clock. During all this time a sentinel, who had been relieved at eight o'clock, had been watching his door. Danglars suddenly felt a strong inclination to see the person who kept watch over him. He had remarked that a few rays, not of daylight but from a lamp, penetrated through the ill-joined planks of the door; he approached it just as the brigand was refreshing himself with a mouthful of brandy, which, owing to the leathern bottle containing it, sent forth an odour which was extremely unpleasant to Danglars. "Faugh!" he exclaimed, retreating to the extreme corner of his cell.

At twelve, this man was replaced by another functionary, and Danglars, wishing to catch sight of his new guardian, approached the door again. He was an athletic, gigantic bandit, with large eyes, thick lips, and a flat nose; his red hair fell in dishevelled masses like snakes around his shoulders. "Ah! ah!" cried Danglars, "this fellow is more like an ogre than anything else; however, I am rather too old and tough to be very good eating!" We see that Danglars was quite collected enough to jest; at the same time, as though to disprove the ogreish propensities, the man took some black bread, cheese, and onions from his wallet, which he began devouring voraciously. "May I be hanged," said Danglars, glancing at the bandit's dinner through the crevices of the door,— "may I be hanged if I can understand how people can eat such filth!" and he withdrew to seat himself upon his goatskin, which recalled to him the smell of the brandy.

But the secrets of nature are incomprehensible, and there are certain invitations contained in even the coarsest food which appeal very irresistibly to a fasting stomach. Danglars felt his own not to be very well supplied just then; and gradually the man appeared less ugly, the bread less

Four hours passed by, the giant was r
lars, who really began to experience sun
sofly, again applied his eye to the cr
intelligent countenance of his guide.
preparing to mount guard as comfort
opposite to the door, and placing betw
taining chick-pease stewed with bacon.
pretty little basket of grapes and a bottl
decidedly an epicure. While witness
mouth watered. "Come," he said to hi
more tractable than the other!" and
"Coming!" exclaimed Peppino, who,
Maltre Pastrini, understood French per

Danglars immediately recognised him
in such a furious manner, "Put in your h
for recrimination, so he assumed his mo
a gracious smile,—“Excuse me, sir, but
dinner?”

“Does your excellency happen to be

“Happen to be hungry! that's exce
twenty-four hours!” muttered Danglars
sir, I am hungry—very hungry!”——“A
and Peppino placed his pan on the grou
under the nostrils of Danglars.—“Give

“Have you kitchens here?”

“Kitchens?—of course! complete on

“Excellent!”

“Well! a fowl, fish, game, it signifies

“As your excellency pleases! You n

“Yes a fowl” Peppino, turning round

excellency," said Peppino, placing his hand on the banker's shoulder ; "people pay here before they eat. They might not be satisfied, and——"

"Ah ! ah !" thought Danglars, "this is no longer like Paris, without reckoning that I shall probably be fleeced ! Never mind, I will carry it off well ! I have always heard how cheap poultry is in Italy ; I should think a fowl is worth about twelve sous at Rome.—There," he said, throwing a louis down. Peppino picked up the louis, and Danglars again prepared to carve the fowl. "Stay a moment, your excellency," said Peppino, rising ; "you still owe me something."—"I said they would fleece me," thought Danglars ; but resolving to resist the extortion, he said, "Come, how much do I owe you for this fowl ?"

"Your excellency has given me a louis on account."

"A louis on account for a fowl !"—"Certainly ; and your excellency now owes me 4,999 louis !" Danglars opened his enormous eyes on hearing this gigantic joke. "Come, come, this is very droll—very amusing—I allow ; but, as I am very hungry, pray allow me to eat. Stay, here is another louis for you."—"Then, that will make only 4,998 louis," said Peppino, with the same indifference. "I shall get them all in time."

"Oh ! as for that," said Danglars, angry in his perseverance in the jest,—"as for that you will never succeed. Go to the devil ! You do not know with whom you have to deal !" Peppino made a sign, and the youth hastily removed the fowl. Danglars threw himself upon his goatskin, and Peppino, re-closing the door, again began eating his peas and bacon. Though Danglars could not see Peppino, the noise of his teeth allowed no doubt as to his occupation. He was certainly eating, and noisily too, like an ill-bred man. "Brute !" said Danglars. Peppino pretended not to hear him, and, without even turning his head, continued to eat slowly. Danglars' stomach felt so empty, it seemed as though it would be impossible ever to fill it again ; still he had patience for another half-hour, which appeared to him like a century. He again rose and went to the door. "Come, sir, do not keep me starving here any longer, but tell me what they want."—"Nay, your excellency, it is you should tell us what you want. Give your orders, and we will execute them."

"Then open the door directly." Peppino obeyed. "*Pardieu !* I want something to eat ! To eat—do you hear ?"—"Are you hungry ?"

"Come, you understand me."

"What would your excellency like to eat ?"

"A piece of dry bread, since the fowls are beyond all price in this accursed place."—"Bread ! very well. Holloa, there ! some bread !" he exclaimed. The youth brought a small loaf. "How much ?" asked Danglars.

"Four thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight louis," said Peppino ; "you have paid two louis in advance."

"What ! 100,000 francs for a loaf ?"

"One hundred thousand francs !" repeated Peppino.

"But you only asked 100,000 francs for a fowl !"

"We have a fixed price for all our provisions. It signifies nothing whether you eat much or little—whether you have ten dishes or one—it is always the same price."—"What ! still keeping up this silly jest ? My dear fellow, it is perfectly ridiculous—stupid ! You had better tell me at once that you intend starving me to death."

"Oh dear, no, your excellency, unless you intend to commit suicide. Pay and eat."—"And what am I to pay with, brute ?" said Danglars, enraged. "Do you suppose I carry 100,000 francs in my pocket ?"

"Your excellency has 5,050,000 francs in your pocket ; that will be fifty fowls at 100,000 francs a-piece, and half a fowl for the 50,000."

Danglars shuddered. The bandage fell from his eyes, and he understood the joke, which he did not think quite so stupid as he had done just before. "Come," he said, "if I pay you the 100,000 francs, will you be satisfied, and allow me to eat at my ease?"

"Certainly," said Peppino.

"But how can I pay them?"—"Oh, nothing easier : you have an account opened with Messrs. Thomson and French, Via dei Banchi, Rome : give me a bill for 4,998 louis on these gentlemen, and our banker shall take it." Danglars thought it as well to comply with a good grace : so he took the pen, ink, and paper Peppino offered him, wrote the bill, and signed it. "Here," he said, "here is a bill at sight."—"And here is your fowl." Danglars sighed while he carved the fowl ; it appeared very thin for the price it had cost. As for Peppino, he read the paper attentively, put it into his pocket, and continued eating his peas.

CHAPTER CXVII.

THE PARDON.

THE next day Danglars was again hungry ; certainly the air of that dungeon was very appetising. The prisoner expected that he would be at no expense that day, for, like an economical man, he had concealed half of his fowl and a piece of the bread in the corner of his cell. But he had no sooner eaten than he felt thirsty ; he had forgotten that. He struggled against his thirst till his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth ; then, no longer able to resist, he called out. The sentinel opened the door ; it was a new face. He thought it would be better to transact business with his

"Yes, your excellency. What then?"

"How much do you require for my ransom?"—"Merely the 5,000,000 you have about you." Danglars felt a dreadful spasm dart through his heart. "But this is all I have left in the world," he said, "out of an immense fortune. If you deprive me of that, take away my life also."

"We are forbidden to shed your blood."

"And by whom are you forbidden?"—"By him we obey."

"You do, then, obey some one?"—"Yes, a chief."

"I thought you said you were the chief?"

"So I am of these men; but there is another over me."

"And did your superior tell you to treat me thus?"—"Yes."

"But my purse will be exhausted."—"Probably."

"Come," said Danglars, "will you take a million?"—"No."

"Two millions?—three?—four? Come, four? I will give them to you on condition that you let me go."—"Why do you offer me 4,000,000 for what is worth 5,000,000? This is a kind of usury, banker, I do not understand."—"Take all, then—take all, I tell you, and kill me!"—"Come, come, calm yourself. You will excite your blood, and that would produce an appetite it would require a million a day to satisfy. Be more economical."

"But when I have no more money left to pay you?" asked the infuriated Danglars.—"Then you must suffer hunger."

"Suffer hunger?" said Danglars, becoming pale.

"Most likely," replied Vampa, coolly.

"But you say you do not wish to kill me?"—"No."

"And yet you will let me perish with hunger?"

"Ah, that is a different thing."

"Well, then, wretches!" cried Danglars, "I will defy your infamous calculations!—I would rather die at once! You may torture, torment, kill me, but you shall not have my signature again!"—"As your excellency pleases," said Vampa, as he left the cell. Danglars, raving, threw himself on the goatskin. Who could these men be? Who was the invisible chief? What could be his projects towards him? And why, when every one else was allowed to be ransomed, might he not also be? Oh, yes! certainly a speedy, sudden death would be a fine means of deceiving these remorseless enemies, who appeared to pursue him with such incomprehensible vengeance. But to die? For the first time in his life Danglars contemplated death with a mixture of dread and desire; the time had come when the implacable spectre, which exists in the mind of every human creature, arrested his sight, and called out, with every pulsation of his heart, "Thou shalt die!"

Danglars resembled a timid animal excited in the chase: first it flies, then despairs, and at last, by the very force of desperation, succeeds in escaping. Danglars meditated an escape; but the walls were solid rock, a man was sitting reading at the only outlet to the cell, and behind that man figures armed with guns continually passed. His resolution not to sign lasted two days, after which he offered a million for some food. They sent him a magnificent supper, and took his million.

From this time the prisoner resolved to suffer no longer, but to yield to all his exigencies. At the end of twelve days, after having made a splendid dinner, he reckoned his accounts, and found he had only 50,000 francs left. Then a strange reaction took place: he who had just abandoned 5,000,000 endeavoured to save the 50,000 francs he had left; and, sooner than give them up, he resolved to enter again upon his life of privation—

answer. On the fifth day he

"Are you not a Christian
wish to assassinate a man who
my former friends, my former
face to the ground. Then rise
"The chief! the chief!"—
ing; "what do you want?—
holding out his pocket-book, "
liberty—I only ask to live!"

"Then you suffer a great deal

"Still, there have been mer

"I do not think so."—"Y

Danglars thought of the old
seen groaning on his bed. He
groaned. "Yes," he said, "tho
than I have, but then they mu

"Do you repent?" asked a c
hair to stand on end. His feet
and behind the bandit he saw
shadow of a stone column.

"Of what must I repent?" s

"Of the evil you have done,

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! I do in
his emaciated fist.—"Then
cloak, and advancing to the lig

"The Count of Monte-Cris
than he had been just before fi

"You are mistaken—I am n

"Then who are you?"—"I

I am he whose betrothed yo
trampled that you might raise
you condemned to die of hungr
starvation, and who...

withdrew ; when he raised his head he saw nothing more than a kind of shadow disappearing in the passage, before which the bandits bowed. According to the count's directions, Danglars was waited on by Vampa, who brought him the best wine and fruits of Italy ; then, having conducted him to the road, and pointed to his post-chaise, he left him leaning against a tree. He remained there all night, not knowing where he was. When daylight dawned, he saw that he was near a stream ; he was thirsty, and dragged himself towards it. As he stooped down to drink, he perceived that his hair had become quite white.

CHAPTER CXVIII.

THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER.

IT was about six o'clock in the evening ; an opal-coloured light, through which an autumnal sun shed its golden rays, descended on the blue sea. The heat of the day had gradually decreased, and a light breeze arose, seeming like the respiration of nature on awakening from the burning siesta of the south ; a delicious zephyr played along the coasts of the Mediterranean, and wafted from shore to shore the sweet perfume of plants, mingled with the fresh smell of the sea.

A light yacht, chaste and elegant in its form, was gliding amidst the first dews of night over the immense lake, extending from Gibraltar to the Dardanelles, and from Tunis to Venice. The motion resembled that of a swan with its wings opened towards the wind, gliding on the water. It advanced, at the same time, swiftly and gracefully, leaving behind it a glittering track. By degrees the sun disappeared behind the western horizon ; but, as though to prove the truth of the fanciful ideas in heathen mythology, its indiscreet rays reappeared on the summit of each wave, seeming to reveal that the god of fire had just enfolded himself in the bosom of Amphitrite, who in vain endeavoured to hide her lover beneath her azure mantle. The yacht moved rapidly on, though there did not appear to be sufficient wind to ruffle the curls on the head of a young girl. Standing on the prow was a tall man, of a dark complexion, who saw with dilating eyes that they were approaching a dark mass of land in the shape of a cone, rising from the midst of the waves, like the hat of a Catalan. "Is that Monte-Cristo ?" asked the traveller, to whose orders the yacht was for the time submitted, in a melancholy voice.

"Yes, your excellency," said the captain, "we have reached it !"

"We have reached it !" repeated the traveller, in an accent of indescribable sadness. Then he added, in a low tone, "Yes ; that is the haven." And then he again plunged into a train of thought, the character of which was better revealed by a sad smile, than it would have been by tears. A few minutes afterwards a flash of light, which was extinguished instantly, was seen on the land, and the sound of firearms reached the yacht.

"Your excellency," said the captain, "that was the land signal, will you answer it yourself ?"—"What signal ?" The captain pointed towards the island, up the side of which ascended a volume of smoke, increasing as it rose. "Ah, yes," he said, as if awaking from a dream. "Give it to me."

The captain gave him a loaded carbine ; the traveller slowly raised it, and fired in the air. Ten minutes afterwards, the sails were brailled, and they cast anchor about one hundred paces from the little harbour. The canoe was already in the sea, loaded with four rowers and the pilot. The

footing. After about thirty paces they
on the ground to shake off the wet, and
him his road, for it was quite dark. Ju
his shoulder, and a voice, which made
evening, Maximilian ! you are punctua
count ?" said the young man, in an almo
Cristo's hand with both his own.

"Yes ; you see I am as exact as y
dear fellow ; you must change your clot
Come, I have a habitation prepared for
fatigue and cold." Monte-Cristo per
turned round ; indeed, Morrel saw wi
brought him had left without being paid
sound of their oars might be heard as t

"Oh, yes," said the count, "you are l

"Yes ; I paid them nothing, and yet

"Never mind that, Maximilian," said
made an agreement with the Navy, tha
free of all charge. I have made a barg
with surprise. "Count," he said, "you
——"How so?"——"Here you laugh."

"You are right to recall me to myse
delighted to see you again, and forgot
is fleeting."——"Oh, no, no ! count," cri
hands, "pray laugh ; be happy, and f
that life is endurable to sufferers. O
you are ; you affect this gaiety to inspi
wrong, Morrel ; I was really happy."

"Then you forget me ; so much the

"Yes : for as the gladiator said to

can only be appeased in the grave? Are you still actuated by the which drags the living to the pursuit of death, or are you only suffering the prostration of fatigue and the weariness of 'hope deferred?' The loss of memory rendered it impossible for you to weep? Oh! My friend, if this be the case, if you can no longer weep, if your heart be dead, if you put all your trust in God, then, Maximilian, be consoled—do not complain.”——“Count,” said Morrel, in a firm voice, “listen to me, as to a man whose thoughts are directed to heaven, though he remains on earth: I come to die in the arms of a friend. Certainly, there are people whom I love. I love my sister, I love her husband Emmanuel; but I require a strong mind to support me on my last moments; my sister would be bathed in tears and I could not bear to see her suffer; Emmanuel would tear the life from my hand, and alarm the house with his cries. You, count, who are more than mortal, will, I am sure, lead me to death by a pleasant path, will you not?”——“My friend,” said the count, “I have still one doubt,—am I weak enough to pride yourself upon your sufferings?”

“Indeed,—I am calm,” said Morrel, giving his hand to the count; his pulse does not beat slower or faster than usual. No, I feel I have reached the goal, and I will go no farther. You told me to wait and hope; I know what you did, unfortunate adviser? I waited a month, or I suffered for a month! I did hope (man is a poor wretched creature)—did hope. What I cannot tell: something wonderful, an absurdity, the result of what nature He alone can tell who has mingled with our thoughts that folly we call hope. Yes: I did wait;—yes; I did hope, count, during this quarter of an hour we have been talking together, you unconsciously wounded, tortured my heart, for every word you have spoken has proved that there was no hope for me. Oh! count, I shall sleep peacefully in the arms of death!” Morrel pronounced these words with an energy which made the count shudder. “My friend,” continued Morrel, “you named the fifth of October as the term of the delay,—to-day is the fifth of October,” he took out his watch; “it is five o’clock,—I have yet three hours to live.”

“It is so?” said the count, “come.” Morrel mechanically followed the count and they had entered the grotto before he perceived it. He felt a tremor under his feet, a door opened, perfumes surrounded him, and a brilliant light dazzled his eyes. Morrel hesitated to advance, he dreaded the revivifying effect of all that he saw. Monte-Cristo drew him in gently. “Should we not spend the last three hours remaining to us of life, these ancient Romans, who, when condemned by Nero, their emperor, sat down at a table covered with flowers, and gently glided into the beyond through the perfume of heliotropes and roses?” Morrel smiled. “As you please,” he said; “death is always death, that is forgetfulness, repose, and freedom from life, and therefore from grief.” He sat down, and Monte-Cristo placed himself opposite to him. They were in the marvellous room before described, where the statues had baskets on their laps always filled with fruits and flowers. Morrel had looked carelessly at the statues and had probably noticed nothing.

“Do not talk like men,” he said, looking at the count. “Proceed!”——“Count!” said Morrel, “you are the epitome of all knowledge, and you seem to be a being descended from a wiser and more advanced world than ours.”

“There is something true in what you say,” said the count, with that smile which made him so handsome; “I have descended from a planet

called grief."—"I believe all you tell me without questioning [its sense in proof, you told me to live, and I did live; you told me to hope, and I almost did so. I am almost inclined to ask you, as though you had experienced death, 'is it painful to die?'"

Monte-Cristo looked upon Morrel with indescribable tenderness. "Yes," he said, "yes, doubtless it is painful, if you violently break the outer covering which obstinately begs for life. If you plunge a dagger into your flesh: if you insinuate a bullet into your brain, which the less shock disorders; certainly, then, you will suffer pain, and you will regret quitting a life for a repose you have bought at so dear a price."—"Yes; I understand there is a secret of luxury and pain in death, as well as in life: the only thing is to understand it."

"You have spoken truly, Maximilian; according to the care we bestow upon it, death is either a friend who rocks us gently as a nurse, or an enemy who violently drags the soul from the body. Some day, when the world is much older, and when mankind will be masters of all the destructive powers in nature, to serve for the general good of humanity; when mankind, as you were just saying, have discovered the secrets of death, then that death will become as sweet and voluptuous as a slumber in the arms of your beloved."—"And if you wished to die, you would choose this death, count?"—"Yes."

Morrel extended his hand. "Now I understand," he said, "why you had me brought here to this desolate spot, in the midst of the ocean, to this subterranean palace: it was because you loved me, was it not, count? It was because you loved me well enough to give me one of those sweet means of death of which we were speaking; a death without agony, a death which allows me to fade away while pronouncing Valentine's name, and pressing your hand."

"Yes; you have guessed rightly, Morrel," said the count, "that is what I intended."—"Thanks! the idea, that to-morrow I shall no longer suffer, is sweet to my heart."

"Do you then regret nothing?"—"No," replied Morrel.

"Not even me?" asked the count, with deep emotion. Morrel's clear eye was for the moment clouded, then it shone with unusual lustre, and a large tear rolled down his cheek.

"What?" said the count, "do you still regret anything in the world, and yet die?"—"Oh! I entreat you," exclaimed Morrel, in a low voice. "do not speak another word, count, do not prolong my punishment." The count fancied he was yielding, and this belief revived the horrible doubt that had overwhelmed him at the Château d'If. "I am endeavouring," he thought, "to make this man happy; I look upon this restitution as a weight thrown into the scale to balance the evil I have wrought. Now, supposing I am deceived, if this man has not been unhappy enough to merit happiness. Alas! what would become of me who can only atone for evil by doing good?" Then he said aloud, "Listen, Morrel, I see your grief is great, but still you do not like to risk your soul." Morrel smiled sadly. "Count," he said, "I swear to you my soul is no longer my own."—"Maximilian, you know I have no relation in the world. I have accustomed myself to regard you as my son; well, then, to save my son, I will sacrifice my life, nay, even my fortune."

"What do you mean?"—"I mean, that you wish to quit life because you do not understand all the enjoyments which are the fruits of a large fortune. Morrel, I possess nearly a hundred millions, I give them to you, with such a fortune you can attain every wish. Are you ambitious? every

career is open to you. Overturn the world, change its character, yield to mad ideas, be even criminal—but live.”

“Count, I have your word,” said Morrel, coldly, then taking out his watch, he added : “It is half-past eleven.”

“Morrel, can you intend it in my house, beneath my eyes ?”

“Then let me go,” said Maximilian, “or I shall think you did not love me for my own sake, but for yours ;” and he rose.—“It is well,” said Monte-Cristo, whose countenance brightened at these words, “you wish it ; you are inflexible ; yes, as you said, you are indeed wretched, and a miracle alone can cure you ; sit down, Morrel, and wait.”

Morrel obeyed ; the count rose, and unlocking a closet with a key suspended from his gold chain, took from it a little silver casket, beautifully carved and chased, the corners of which represented four bending figures, similar to the Caryatides, the forms of women, symbols of the angels aspiring to heaven. He placed the casket on the table ; then opening it, took out a little golden box, the top of which flew open when touched by a secret spring. This box contained an unctuous substance partly solid, of which it was impossible to discover the colour, owing to the reflection of the polished gold, sapphires, rubies, emeralds, which ornamented the box. It was a mixed mass of blue, red, and gold. The count took out a small quantity of this with a gilt spoon, and offered it to Morrel, fixing a long steadfast glance upon him. It was then observable that the substance was greenish.

“This is what you asked for,” he said, “and what I promised to give you.”—“I thank you from the depths of my heart,” said the young man, taking the spoon from the hands of Monte-Cristo. The count took another spoon, and again dipped it into the golden box. “What are you going to do, my friend ?” asked Morrel, arresting his hand.

“*Ma foi !* Morrel, I was thinking that I, too, am weary of life, and since an opportunity presents itself—”

“Stay !” said the young man. “You who love, and are beloved ; you, who have faith and hope,—oh ! do not follow my example ; in your case it would be a crime. Adieu, my noble and generous friend, adieu ; I will go and tell Valentine what you have done for me.” And slowly, though without any hesitation, only waiting to press the count’s hand fervently, he swallowed the mysterious substance offered by Monte-Cristo. Then they were both silent. Ali, mute and attentive, brought the pipes and coffee, and disappeared. By degrees the lamps gradually faded in the hands of the marble statues which held them, and the perfumes appeared less powerful to Morrel. Seated opposite to him, Monte-Cristo watched him in the shadow, and Morrel saw nothing but the bright eyes of the count. An overpowering sadness took possession of the young man ; his hands relaxed their hold ; the objects in the room gradually lost their form and colour ; and his disturbed vision seemed to perceive doors and curtains open in the wall.

“Friend,” he cried, “I feel that I am dying ; thanks !” He made a last effort to extend his hand, but it fell powerless beside him. Then it appeared to him that Monte-Cristo smiled, not with the strange and fearful expression which had sometimes revealed to him the secrets of his heart, but with the benevolent kindness of a father for an infant. At the same time the count appeared to increase in stature ; his form nearly double its usual height, stood out in relief against the red tapestry, his black hair was thrown back, and he stood in the attitude of a menacing angel. Morrel, overpowered, turned round in the arm-chair : a delicious

in which he was gently gliding into his of marvellous beauty appear on the threshold of two rooms. Pale, and sweetly smiling, conjuring the angel of vengeance. "Is that thought the dying man ; "that angel Monte-Cristo pointed Morrel to the young man with clasped hands and a smile upon his lips.

"Valentine ! Valentine !" he mentally cried, but no sound ; and, as though all his strenuous emotion, he sighed and closed his eyes. His lips again moved.

"He is calling you," said the count ; your destiny—he from whom death would come to him. Happily, I vanquished death ; never again be separated on earth ; sinners and you. Without me, you would both find atonement of these two existences !"

Valentine seized the count's hand, and carried it to her lips.

"Oh ! thank me again !" said the count, "that I have restored you to happiness ; I require this assurance."

"Oh ! yes, yes, I thank you with all my heart ; and if you doubt the sincerity of my thanks, ask my beloved sister Haydée, who is in France, has caused me to wait patiently for me of you."

"You then love Haydée?" asked Morrel, who vainly endeavoured to dissimulate.

"Oh yes ! with all my soul."

shadow yours. Daughter of a prince ! I restore to you the riches and name of your father."

Haydée became pale, and lifting her transparent hands to heaven, exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with tears, "Then you leave me, my lord?"

"Haydée, Haydée ! you are young and beautiful ; forget even my name, and be happy !"

"It is well," said Haydée ; "your order shall be executed, my lord ; I will forget even your name, and be happy." And she stepped back to retire.

"Oh heavens !" exclaimed Valentine, who was supporting the head of Morrel on her shoulder, "do you not see how pale she is ? Do you not see how she suffers ?"

Haydée answered with a heartrending expression, "Why should he understand this, my sister ? He is my master, and I am his slave ; he has the right to notice nothing."

The count shuddered at the tones of a voice which penetrated the inmost recesses of his heart : his eyes met those of the young girl, and he could not bear their brilliancy. "Oh heavens !" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "can my suspicions be correct ? Haydée, would it please you not to leave me ?"

"I am young," gently replied Haydée ; "I love the life you have made so sweet to me, and should regret to die."

"You mean, then, that if I leave you, Haydée——"

"I should die ; yes, my lord."

"Do you then love me ?"

"Oh, Valentine ! he asks if I love him. Valentine, tell him if you love Maximilian." The count felt his heart dilate and throb ; he opened his arms, and Haydée, uttering a cry, sprang into them. "Oh, yes !" she cried, "I do love you ! I love you as one loves a father, brother, husband ! I love you as my life, for you are the best, the noblest of created beings !"——"Let it be, then, as you wish, sweet angel ; God has sustained me in my struggle with my enemies, and has given me this victory ; He will not let me end my triumph with this penance ; I wished to punish myself, but He has pardoned me ! Love me then, Haydée ! Who knows ? perhaps your love will make me forget all I wish not to remember."

"What do you mean, my lord ?"——"I mean that one word from you has enlightened me more than twenty years of slow experience ; I have but you in the world, Haydée ; through you I again connect myself with life, through you I shall suffer, through you rejoice."

"Do you hear him, Valentine ?" exclaimed Haydée ; "he says that through me he will suffer——through *me*, who would yield my life for his." The count withdrew for a moment. "Have I discovered the truth ?" he said ; "but whether it be for recompense or punishment, I accept my fate. Come, Haydée, come !" and throwing his arm round the young girl's waist, he pressed the hand of Valentine, and disappeared.

An hour had nearly passed, during which Valentine, breathless and motionless, watched steadfastly over Morrel. At length she felt his heart beat, a faint breath played upon his lips, a slight shudder, announcing the return of life, passed through the young man's frame. At length, his eyes opened, but they were at first fixed and expressionless ; then sight returned, and, with it, feeling and grief. "Oh !" he cried, in an accent of despair, "the count has deceived me ; I am yet living ;" and extending his hand towards the table, he seized a knife.

awaiting a sign from them to advance ; he
" Ah ! it is Jacopo," she said, " the captain
him towards them.

" Do you wish to speak to us ?" asked M

" I have a letter to give you from the co

" From the count !" murmured the two

" Yes ; read it." Morrel opened the let

" MY DEAR MAXIMILIAN,

" There is a felucca for you at anco
Leghorn, where M. Noirtier waits his gra
bless before you lead her to the altar. All
my house in the Champs Elysées, and
marriage gifts bestowed by Edmond Dant
ter, Morrel. Mademoiselle de Villefort
entreat her to give to the poor the immen
her father, now a madman, and her brothe
his mother. Tell the angel who will watc
rel, to pray sometimes for a man, who, like
instant, equal to God ; but who now acknow
that God alone possesses supreme power
those prayers may soften the remorse he f
Morrel, this is the secret of my conduct
happiness nor misery in the world ; there
state with another, nothing more. He wh
best able to experience supreme happiness
to die, Morrel, that we may appreciate the

" Live, then, and be happy, beloved chi
forget, that until the day when God will de
all human wisdom is contained in these tw



The eyes of both were fixed upon the spot indicated by the sailor, and on the blue line separating the sky from the Mediterranean Sea, they perceived a large white sail. "Gone!" said Morrel: "Gone!—Adieu, my friend!—adieu, my father!"

"Gone!" murmured Valentine: "Adieu, my friend!—adieu, my sister!"
—"Who can say whether we shall ever see them again?" said Morrel, with tearful eyes.

"My friend," replied Valentine, "has not the count just told us, that all human wisdom was contained in these two words,—*'Wait and hope!'*"

THE END.

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